

The Invasion (Acts 8:4-25)

Prejudice, animosity, deep suspicion and hostility. Add to that a city completely in awe and under the power of an egomaniac sorcerer who loved to boast he was someone great. That is what Philip (follower of Jesus) walked into when he arrived in Samaria. Obstacles like this would be intimidating to anyone. Where would you begin? What would you say?

1. The INVASION: under a new power (Acts 8:4-13)

Philip finds himself in enemy territory.

The Samaritans and the Jews hated each other = tons of prejudice and animosity having built up over hundreds of years.

Philip quickly saw who the real enemy was and understood what he was participating in.

CS Lewis (Mere Christianity) *“Enemy-occupied territory – that is what the world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.”*

In proclaiming the liberating power of a Jesus (the rule of God) Philip was calling out any and every other power for what it was – as counterfeit.

V7 MANY were delivered from evil spirits and MANY were healed.

Simon = a sorcerer, wizard, magician – the man was a celebrity for sure.

They *believed* = embraced the reality of who Jesus is and what he accomplished.

They *obeyed* = were baptized. Allegiance to Jesus, a new loyalty

2. The INCLUSION: part of a new family (Acts 8:14-17)

The gift of salvation normally comes with the gift of the Spirit. Acts 2:38-39

God withholds the Spirit until the apostles lay hands on them THEN gives the Spirit like he did at Pentecost (+ something visible happened!)

= “what’s happened here is legit!” case closed! Yeah, the Samaritans are a part of this!

No one is too far gone or in a place beyond the reach of the Gospel.

3. The Illusion: a perverted request to control God (Acts 8:18-24)

Simon saw what happened and thought, *“I want that power for myself!”*

Not, *“I want God to use me however he sees fit”* - *“I want to use that power for myself.”*

V20 Peter brings him the strongest rebuke / warning you can imagine!

V23 Then Peter exposes Simon’s heart *“full of bitterness and captive to sin.”*

That’s a bad diagnosis. Literally, Simon is full of bitter *poison!* Deuteronomy 29:18; Hebrews 12:15

How often have we treated God more like a genie than the sovereign God over all?

Simon is presented to us as a *warning!*

Will you say, *“YES I want more of you BUT not to use you, I want to know you and I want to be used by YOU. Here I am, use me as you choose!”*

V25 The invasion continued one village at a time.

Boundaries had been broken, Jesus was doing what he promised and there wasn’t a wizard in Samaria that could stop him. Or control him.

QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you in the Talk on of Acts 8:4-25? What did you learn? What encouraged you?
2. Given the history between Jews and Samaritans, what is remarkable about Philip’s preaching and the response (Acts 8:5-8)? What exactly is *the invasion*? Note: consider what Philip proclaimed.
3. Why is Simon captivated by certain aspects of Philip’s activity (8:7-13)?
4. What is the purpose of the apostles’ visit from Jerusalem (8:14-17)? Why was this such a big deal in the early church?
5. When the new believers receive the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the apostle’s hands, Simon becomes even more intensely interested. What is he *really* after?
6. Why do you think Peter gives Simon such a strong reply (8:20-23)?
7. What are ways we’re tempted to use God for personal gain? How do we guard against this?
8. What kind of influence / sway / power does the Holy Spirit have over you? How can you be sure?