**The Aftermath of the Samaritan Revival**

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

A man was driving down the road one day when a rabbit jumped in front of his car and he was unable to stop. Being an animal lover, he stopped the car and wept when he saw that the rabbit had died. But just then a woman pulled up and offered to help. She took an aerosol can from her purse and sprayed it on the rabbit, after which he promptly revived and hopped off. A few yards away he looked back and began waving at them, and wouldn’t stop. “That’s amazing,” the man declared. “What’s in that can.” She handed it to him and he read: “Hare Restorer. Restores life to dead hare, and adds permanent wave.”

Well, I’m sure that animal lover was glad that he could “revive” that dead hare! But in our last message in Acts 8, we read about a different kind of revival. Let’s begin by reviewing the details of what happened, beginning in Acts 8:5:

**“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” (Acts 8:5-8).**

Now when verse says that the city gave heed with one accord to the things which Philip spake, that’s a description of a *spiritual* revival. And there’s something we can learn from this revival. When Verse 8 adds that there was great joy in that city—can you think of any cities that could use some joy in our own country lately? The city of Minneapolis, maybe, and all the cities that were torn apart in the aftermath of the recent incident involving a white policeman and a black suspect?

Do you know what the answer to racism is? It’s the preaching of the same Christ that brought joy to the city of Samaria. If you could see the racially diverse church that I pastor in the south suburbs of Chicago, you’d know that.

On the other hand, do you know what the answer to a lack of respect for the police is? It’s the preaching of the same Christ that brought joy to the city of Samaria. You’d know that too if you could hear how I lead our congregation in prayer every Sunday morning for our leaders in government, “and for all that are in authority” over us (I Tim. 2:1,2). That includes police officers, whom the Bible calls *ministers of God* (Rom.13:4).

Do you know what the answer to a fear of dying from a virus is—a fear that literally paralyzed the entire planet for three months lately during the Covid-19 issue? It’s the preaching of the same Christ that brought joy to Samaria.

You know, between the lockdown, and the quarantine, and the shortages at the grocery store, and the rioting and the looting—none of our cities have had any joy for months now. But all of them *could* have joy—even the “great” joy that Samaria experienced—if they’d just do what the Samaritans did and give need to the preaching of Christ.

But the only way that’s gonna happen is if you and I start acting a little more like Philip, and start *sharing* the answer to all these things like the ambassadors for Christ that the Apostle Paul says we are (IICor.5:20). We’re sitting on the solution to *all* of life’s problems. But that’s the problem. We’re just *sitting on it.* Because as the old saying goes, if you’re not part of the solution, you’re part of the problem.

Do you want to bring joy to the city where you live? The only solution is to preach Christ to people, and then teach them what the Bible says about all of the things that rob them of joy.

Of course, even if you do bring a revival to your city, don’t expect the devil to take it lying down, any more than he did in Samaria here in our text. After describing the revival in Acts 8:5-8, what’s the first word of verse 9? “But…!” Any time there’s any kind of spiritual progress, Satan will always make sure there’s a fly in the ointment. And the fly in the ointment in Samaria went by the name of Simon. So let’s read on to see how he tried to gum up the works:

**“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” (Acts 8:9).**

Now here we see that before Philip got to Samaria, the Samaritans were *bewitched* by a “sorcerer” named Simon. And if you are wondering what kind of sorcery was available to men in Bible days, the first time that word is used in the Bible is in Exodus 7:10,11:

**“Aaron cast down his rod…and it became a serpent…*the sorcerers* …the magicians of Egypt, *they also did in like manner with their enchantments…*Aaron…smote the waters…and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood…*And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments...*And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. *And the magicians did so with their enchantments…”* (Exodus 7:20-22; 8:6,7).**

So sorcerers in the Bible were men who could work the same kinds of miracles that God empowered *His* men to work. That means Simon wasn’t hoodwinking people by doing some cheap parlor tricks. He was bewitching them by doing *legitimate* signs and wonders.

And when verse 9 says that he not only did them, he also gave out that he himself was “some great one,” that makes him a type of the antichrist, whom the Bible describes as,

**“…that man of sin…the son of perdition…who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, *shewing himself that he is God…with all power and signs and lying wonders”* (II Thessalonians 2:3,4,9).**

As you can see, Antichrist will *also* be able to work legitimate miracles. “Lying wonders” doesn’t mean he won’t be able to work genuine miracles. “All power and signs” means he will work genuine miracles, but he will work them in order to get people to believe the lie that he is Israel’s Christ. And when it says he’ll claim to be *God—*well, I don’t know about you, but I’d call that giving out that you yourself are “some great one,” just as Simon did.

Now Antichrist hadn’t come yet back then, of course. But do you know what the Apostle John said about him?

**“…it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, *even now are there many antichrists;* whereby we know that it is the last time” (I John 2:18).**

John says there were “many” antichrists, and I think this guy Simon was one of them. He was one of *many* men who could do genuine miracles like that.

And you’ll notice that John says these antichrists were a sign that they were in the last times. And they *were* in the last times 2,000 years ago when John wrote that! But as a grace believer, you know that God interrupted the fulfillment of Israel’s last days to introduce the dispensation of the mystery (Eph.3:1-3). If you don’t understand that, you’re going to think that John was mistaken, and that consequently there’s a mistake in your Bible!

So I remind you that we’re not just splitting hairs when we talk about the importance of knowing the mystery. We’re defending the very integrity of the Word of God—and equipping *you* to defend it as well!

But what we are seeing here with Simon is a picture of what the world will look like after the Rapture when God restarts His prophetic clock, and guys like Simon start running around *again* working miracles, and claiming to be some great one—just as the Lord predicted would happen when the 12 asked Him about the last days in Matthew 24:3-5:

**“…the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us…*what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?* And Jesus answered…Take heed that no man deceive you. For *many* shall come in My name, saying, *I am Christ;* and…deceive many”**

I don’t know about you, but I’d say that claiming to be Christ would be giving out that you yourself are some great one. And the Lord predicted that there would be *many* false christs deceiving people in the Tribulation.

And you know *how* those christs will “deceive many,” don’t you? If you forgot, the Lrod went on to tell us in Matthew 24:24, saying:

**“For there shall arise false Christs,and false prophets, *and shall show great signs and wonders;* insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect”**

Those false christs will deceive people the same way that Simon did it, with sorcery-type miracles! And all those christs will be types of the Antichrist. If you don’t believe me, see if what we read next doesn’t remind you of the antichrist:

**“To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God” (Acts 8:10).**

Doesn’t that remind you of what we read about the antichrist in Revelation 13:3:

**“…*all the world* wondered after the beast…”**

How about what John wrote about him in Revelation 17:8?

“…***they that dwell on the earth shall wonder…*when they behold the beast.”**

All the world will wonder at the beast, just as all Samaria wondered after Simon! I mean, if people today wonder after the anemic “miracles” done by religious leaders at healing meetings, and the smoke-and-mirrors type illusions done by professional magicians, imagine how they’ll wonder after a man who will do *legitimate* miracles!

But as we read on we see something about Simon that doesn’t seem to fit him as a type of the antichrist:

**“And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries” (Acts 8:11).**

When it says that Simon bewitched them “long time,” that doesn’t seem to fit what we know about the relatively short career of the antichrist. After all, look how Moses used that exact phrase “long time” to tell the people of Israel,

**“…our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt *a long time;* and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers” (Numbers 20:15).**

The people of Israel were vexed as slaves in Egypt *for 400 years,* much longer than the Antichrist will vex Israel, and much longer than Simon or any other man could typify his sorcery. But that phrase “long time” can *also* mean what it meant when we read what one of the apostles said to the Lord in John 14:8,9:

**“Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been *so long time* with you, and yet has thou not known Me…”**

If you know your Bible you know that the Lord had been with the apostles about three years. You know. About the same amount of time that Antichrist will bewitch people during the first half of Daniel’s 70th week of Tribulation! That means Simon is even a type of the antichrist in the “long time” of his bewitchery.

Now maybe you’re wondering why it is important to learn about the antichrist by studying men who were types of the antichrist. Well, I recently received an email from a man who believes that President Trump’s son-in-law is the antichrist because he finds him “rather sinister looking.” You smile, because as a grace believer you know that the beast can’t be revealed until after we are raptured (IIThes.2:1-8).

But listen, that man is a grace believer as well. He even attends a grace church. But evidently it is not a church that teaches things like the types of the antichrist, so he thinks that being sinister looking is one of the ways to identify him.

Now I’ve met this man, and I love him in the Lord, and I don’t mean to make fun of him. But let me ask you, what happens if he decides not to vote for President Trump just to keep hiks son-in-law from being in a position of influence? I don’t care who you vote for, but that’s not a good reason to choose not to vote for a candidate!

But how about this: what if he decides to go out and *shoot* the president’s son-in-law to save the world from the antichrist?

I say all this to remind you of the importance of teaching things like this. People do some pretty goofy things in the name of religion, and the only reason you and I don’t is that we study the Word of God in its entirety, including things like the antichrist that don’t pertain to our particular dispensation.

But now as we read on, we see that the power of Simon’s sorcery was no match for the power of God:

**“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” (Acts 8:12).**

Now if this is a picture of the Tribulation as I’ve been saying, it answers another question that a man asked me recently. He wanted to know if anyone will get saved in the Tribulation, something he questioned after reading what Paul wrote about the antichrist in II Thessalonians 2:8-12:

**“…then shall that Wicked be revealed…Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: *That they all might be damned who believed not the truth…”***

Perhaps you can see why he thought no one will be saved in the Tribulation based on what the apostle wrote there. But you know that he must be misreading his words, for in Revelation 7 the Apostle John was given a vision of heaven, and he described it saying,

**“I beheld…*a great multitude*…before the Lamb, clothed with white robes…And one of the elders answered…What are these which are arrayed in white robes?...And he said…*they which came out of great tribulation…”* (Revelation 7:9-14).**

So yes, a “multitude” of people will get saved in the Tribulation—despite being bewitched by the antichrist. And you’re seeing a type of that here when a multitude in Samaria got saved, despite being bewitched by Simon.

And when verse 12 says “they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God,” we know that that’s even the same *gospel* that they’ll believe in the Tribulation, for the Lord predicted that “the gospel of the kingdom *shall be preached in all the world…*then shall the end come” (Mt.24:14). But you know that’s a *different* gospel than what we preach, for when the Lord sent the 12 into all the world to *preach* that gospel,

**“…He said unto them, *Go ye into all the world,* and preach the gospel to every creature. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”* (Mark 16:15,16).**

As you may know, under the gospel of the kingdom you had to be baptized to be saved. That explains why verse 12 says that “both men *and* women” were baptized. I’m sometimes asked if women were baptized, for we know that God always intended for His people to be “kings and priests” to the rest of the world (Rev.1:6; 5:10), and priests had to be baptized (Ex.29:4)—and only men could be priests! But water baptism was *also* for salvation (IPe.3:21), so both men and women had to be baptized.

But now, knowing how lazy God’s people can be, you might be wondering what will motivate Tribulation Jews to preach the gospel in all the world. Well, let’s back up in Matthew 24 to where the Lord said,

**“*Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you:* and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake” (Matthew 24:9).**

The reason they’re going to go into all the world to preach the gospel is that they’ll be running from persecution! You know. Like Philip was here in Acts 8! Don’t forget, in the context here Stephen had just been stoned to death,

**“And Saul was consenting 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.**

**“And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.**

**“As for Saul, he made havock of the church, 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.**

**“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them” (Acts 8:1-5).**

Saul was a type of the antichrist, and Philip was a type of the saints who will flee the antichrist and go to places like Samaria to preach the kingdom. Do you remember where the Lord told the Jews to flee when they saw the beast?

**“When ye…see the abomination of desolation…*flee into the mountains”* (Matthew 24:15).**

And do you know where they have a lot of mountains? *Samaria!* (Amos 3:9).

You see,, Philip’s story isn’t just a bunch of dry history. It’s a picture of future events! God’s types are His illustrations of His prophecies.

But as we read on, something else happens that makes it look like Simon can’t be a type of the antichrist, or even a type of the *many* antichrists that will be running around in the Tribulation:

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

If Simon believed and was baptized, how can he be a type of a false christ? Well, later in this passage we are going to see that he may have believed, but he didn’t “believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb.10:39). He believed like the men we read about in John 2:23-25:

**“…many believed in His name, *when they saw the miracles which He did.* But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them…”**

The Lord didn’t commit Himself to those believers because He *knew* they hadn’t believed to the saving of the soul! They just believed because they saw Him do some miracles. And *Simon* believed when he saw *Philip* perform some miracles. But he didn’t believe to save his soul, he believed because Philip’s miracles were doubtless greater than *his* miracles, just as Moses’ snake swallowed up the snakes of the magicians. That’s no doubt why people left Simon for Philip.

So Simon wanted to infiltrate the church in order to learn Philip’s secret, so he could win those folks back to following after him. You see, Simon wasn’t doing miracles out of the goodness of his heart. He was making *money* being known as “the great power of God” (Acts 8:10). And if he could learn to do Philip’s greater miracles, he’d be back in business when Philip moved on. Remember, Philip was just passing through Samaria.

And all of that is a type of what will be happening in the Tribulation. Remember how the Lord said, “these signs shall follow them that believe” (Mark 16:17)? That means believers in the Tribulation will be doing greater miracles than those done by the false christs. And that means the false christs are going to do what Simon did and infiltrate the church to learn how to do them—for the same reason Simon wanted to learn to do them, to make *money,* just as Peter predicted when he wrote,

**“…there were false prophets also among the people, *even as there shall be false teachers among you*…having…*covetous practices*…” (IIPet.2:1,14).**

But those false christs will eventually learn to make money in another way, a way that Peter described when he went on to say of their “covetous practices” that they’ll be “*following the way of Balaam*…who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (II Peter 2:14,15). When Peter compares those false prophets to Balaam—do you remember how Balam made his money? *By turning on the people of Israel!* And that’s how these false christs will eventually learn to make money as well, as we see when Peter also wrote,

**“…through covetousness shall they with feigned words *make merchandise of you…”* (II Peter 2:3).**

I think this verse indicates that there’s going to be a *bounty* on the heads of God’s people in the Tribulation, and the false christs who infiltrate the churches will collect it. And you’re seeing all of this pictured with Simon.

But before we find out what happened to Simon, Luke tells us what happened to the Samaritans in the aftermath of their revival:

**“Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John” (Acts 8:14).**

Now why would the Jerusalem church send apostles to investigate what was happening in Samaria? You’d think they’d hear about the revival and rejoice, and that would be the end of it. But while the Samaritans may have believed the kingdom gospel, but there was something they had to learn as new members of the kingdom church. Do you remember what a Samaritan woman told the Lord in John 4:9?

**“…a woman of Samaria…saith unto Him…Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, *that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship”* (John 4:9-20).**

You see, in our Lord’s day, the inhabitants of Samaria were believers in Israel’s God, but they refused to acknowledge the *headquarters* of Israel’s God in Jerusalem. So it wasn’t enough when the Samaritans in Acts 8 believed, they too had to acknowledge the headquarters of the Jews in Jerusalem. And that’s why the Jerusalem church sent Peter and John to Samaria—and you know that because of what happens next. Speaking of Peter and John, we read,

**“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 of the Lord Jesus.)**

**“Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost” (Acts 8:15-17).**

Now here we have to ask why the Samaritans didn’t receive the Holy Ghost when they believed. After all, isn’t that how Peter said it should happen?

**“Peter said…Repent, and be baptized…*and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”* (Acts 2:38).**

At Pentecost they believed, got baptized, and received the Spirit. No one had to pray for them to get Him. But that’s because those Jews knew the right place to worship! You know that because they were in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. But the Samaritans *didn’t* know the right place to worship. So God told them, as it were, “You’re not getting the Holy Ghost until you get Him from the apostles in Jerusalem.”

And this was *especially* important when we remember that Samaria had gotten saved out of order! Remember, the Lord had told the apostles,

**“…ye shall be witnesses unto Me *both in Jerusalem,* and in all Judaea, *and in Samaria…”* (Acts 1:8).**

Nobody was supposed to get saved before Jerusalem. And when Samaria *did* get saved—after *Jerusalem* stoned Stephen!—the Samaritans might have been tempted to think, “Maybe God moved His headquarters from Jerusalem to our mountain!” That’s why God didn’t give them the Spirit until Jerusalem sent the apostles to them.

You see, the 12 had to sanction this abrupt change in God’s “Jerusalem first” policy, and put their stamp of approval on it—just like they had to sanction it later when *the Gentiles* started getting saved out of order before Jerusalem under Paul’s ministry. A sanction that they gave in Acts 15, one that Paul summarized when he wrote,

**“…James, Cephas, and John…gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; *that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision”* (Galatians 2:9).**

Now if you are wondering why Jerusalem didn’t send all 12 apostles, its because of what the Lord told the twelve in Matthew 18:19:

**“…*if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask*, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven”**

Now that’s not a prayer promise, as most Christians think. That was the Lord’s way of giving two or three apostles the power to make decisions for all twelve! Don’t be disappointed when that verse doesn’t work as a prayer promise, for that is not what the Lord had in mind when He spoke those words!

Okay, let’s get back to what happened to Simon:

**“And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,**

**“Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost” (Acts 8:18,19).**

Simon said, as it were, “Hey, that’s a pretty neat trick! Teach me how to do it!” If you know anything about magicians, they are always buying new tricks from one another. So Simon offered to pay to learn the apostles’ secret. And that told Peter all he needed to know about Simon:

**“But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.**

**“Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God” (Acts 8:20,21).**

Now notice that Peter could tell that Simon wasn’t saved just by the words that he spoke! That is, he didn’t have to wait to see if he *lived* like he was saved, as you hear Lordship Salvation Christians say. Of course, the reason they say that is because of what the Lord said in Matthew 7:20,21:

**“…*by their fruits ye shall know them.* Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; *but he that doeth the will of My Father”***

But the thing you need to know about that is, he said that to people who were about to be filled with the Spirit at Pentecost in such a way that they *could not sin* (IJo.3:9; 5:18). So at Pentecost, you *could* know a believer by his fruits! You see, like a lot of heresies, Lordship Salvation is Biblical, it just isn’t *dispensationally* Biblical.

And if you don’t think that this distinction is important, it’s probably because you haven’t heard from the number of believers who think they aren’t saved because they’re not as spiritual as they think they should be. Don’t you be one of them!

Now Simon might have been a scoundrel, but God even offers salvation to scoundrels, amen? (Said all the scoundrels reading these pages! LOL). We see God offering Simon salvation as we read on:

**“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” (Acts 8:22,23).**

Now when Peter told him he’d be forgiven *if* he repented, that tells you that his sins were not forgiven at the Cross, whether he repented and believed or not, as some of our grace pastors and teachers are affirming. You have to believe to receive forgiveness of sins! That’s why Paul wrote,

**“Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered” (Romans 4:7).**

If everyone’s sins were forgiven at the Cross, it wouldn’t make much sense to talk about the blessedness of having your sins forgiven!

Well, as we read the last words of our text, we see that Peter’s words had an effect on Simon:

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

**“And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans” (Acts 8:24,25).**

As corrupt a man as Simon was, if he repented and believed he could still be forgiven of his sins. That’s a picture of how it will be in the Tribulation for those false christs who will infiltrate the church. Until they take the mark of the beast, they can still repent and be forgiven.

And that’s still how it is today! No matter who you are, or what you’ve done, if you’re not saved, I hope you don’t think that you can buy *any* of God’s gifts with money—especially not the one we read about in Romans 6:23:

**“…the gift of God *is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”***

You can’t buy eternal life, no matter how much money you give to the Lord’s work, and it doesn’t matter which church you give it to. And you can’t barter for it by doing good works in exchange for eternal life, as Paul makes clear in Ephesians 2:8,9:

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: *Not of works,* lest any man should boast”**

For many years I supported myself in the ministry as the pastor of a small poor church by working as a painting contractor. One of the things we contractors would do is barter with one another by trading the good work we were skilled at for the good work of others. As a painter I might trade ten hours of painting for an electrician for ten hours of his time. Well, God is more than willing to begin the good work of salvation in you (Phil.1:6), but He’s not about to exchange the good work of salvation for any good works that you have to offer! All you can do is believe that God can give you eternal life as a free gift because His Son died to pay for it. So “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!” (Acts 16:31).