

## **The Amazing Adventures of Philip the Spirit-filled Servant: Acts 8:4-25**

Review: Pray scripture and increase the word of God in your life.

Has anyone ever said to you, "Pay attention!"? Probably your parent, teacher, or boss said it. What were you paying attention to when you were told, "Pay attention!"? Most likely your phone.

Philip was a believer with a good reputation and "full of the HS and wisdom" - Acts 6:5. He started his ministry waiting on tables and serving widows. After faithfully doing that for a while he became a powerful evangelist. All ministry starts with faithfulness in small duties and graduates to greater ministry.

Due to the persecution of Saul, Philip left Jerusalem and shared the Gospel in Samaria. 8: <sup>4</sup> *Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.* <sup>5</sup> *Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there.* <sup>6</sup> *When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said.* <sup>7</sup> *For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.* <sup>8</sup> *So there was great joy in that city.*

Simon the sorcerer believed in Christ. Philip performed water baptism for all who confessed faith in Christ. The Apostles Peter and John came to baptize the new believers in the HS. Simon wanted to buy the power of the HS to get back the attention he lost as a sorcerer. The HS was casting out unclean spirits through the preaching of Philip, but apparently the unclean spirits using Simon still had a grip on him and didn't come out.

Peter and John condemned Simon's greedy motive. 8: <sup>20</sup> *But Peter replied, "May your money be destroyed with you for thinking God's gift can be bought!"* <sup>21</sup> *You can have no part in this, for your heart is not right with God.* <sup>22</sup> *Repent of your wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive your evil thoughts,* <sup>23</sup> *for I can see that you are full of bitter jealousy and are held captive by sin."*

Stay away from the occult. It's prevalent in Asian countries and becoming more popular in USA. It may seem harmless at first, but demons are present and ready to possess people who want their power to get attention. I have seen magic shows on AGT that are creepy and demonic -

not simple sleight-of-hand card tricks. (The demon-possessed Asian girl - Sacred Riana. There was an act of necromancy that impressed the judges. Necromancy is demons impersonating the spirits of dead people.)

My ABC friend and his Indonesian wife went to share Christ in Borneo-Kalimantan in the early 1980s. When they entered a village to share Christ they encountered witch doctors or sorcerers. Because the people were poor and there were few doctors they went to the witch doctor for healing. The sorcerer would become possessed by a demon and recommend a cure, and ask the sick person to offer a chicken to the demons, give the sick person demon-possessed amulets and charms to hang up in the house. Everyone in the village paid attention to the sorcerer because of his power. How do you get people to pay attention to the Gospel?

Story: [He told me the story of a former sorcerer named Karel who had real power. He had 999 demon spirits helping him. He became a chief sorcerer in Jakarta to important people. He was arrested for some crime. The police tied his hands and feet to the four corners of a table. A large policeman with a metal rod came to beat his chest. When he hit Karel's chest with the rod the policeman screamed and bent over in pain; Karel felt nothing. Karel had the demonic power of something like voodoo-doll magic. Karel could buy things with leaves. He would hand the leaves to the merchant and the leaves looked like Indonesian money to the merchant. When he walked away with what he 'bought' the merchant would then see the money for what it really was - leaves. As the demons began to demand more from him and torment him, he tried to commit suicide. In that moment Jesus Christ appeared to him and told him to repent and preach the Gospel. He burned all of his occult items. Now his mission is to share Christ with other sorcerers.]

Some of the sorcerers are like Simon the magician. They want to be free and believe in Jesus, but don't completely repent of their sorcery. They get a lot of attention and make a lot of money as sorcerers. When the demons come back and promise more power and money, they yield to temptation.

Everyone in the village paid attention to the sorcerer because of his power. How do you get people to pay attention to the Gospel? When Philip came in the power of the HS, the people gave attention to his preaching

because of the demonstration of supernatural power - miracles to back up his preaching. His supernatural power was greater than Simon's as the HS is greater than Satan.

Main Point: Who's getting the attention? 8:6 vs 8:10: Who really possess the "Great Power of God"?

When Philip came to Samaria and preached about Christ and the HS backed up his message with signs and wonders the people PAID ATTENTION to him. But before the people paid attention to Philip they were paying attention to someone else, the magician-sorcerer named Simon.

8:6-7: **When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said.** For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.

8:9-10: 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,<sup>10</sup> and all the people, both high and low, paid attention to him and exclaimed, "This man is rightly called the Great Power of God."**

The people were really paying attention to the power behind Philip and Simon. When they paid attention to Philip preaching the word they were paying attention to the HS. When they paid attention to Simon the sorcerer they indirectly paid attention to Satan and demons and were deceived.

Two scriptures warn us to pay careful attention to the Gospel: 2 Peter 1:19 & Hebrews 2:1. Pay attention to the message of salvation and don't drift away from it. It is light in darkness.

Hebrews 2: <sup>19</sup> And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, <sup>20</sup> knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

2 Peter 1: Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. <sup>2</sup> For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, <sup>3</sup> how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by

those who heard, <sup>4</sup> while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

When we share Christ with someone we must realize that person has been paying attention to someone or something else. He/she has been paying attention to personal problems. He/she has been paying attention to the voices of others and his/her own internal voice. He/She has been paying attention to the world without God's truth; the godless culture and all the ways it works to get a person's attention.

For example, I enjoy listening to worship songs on Youtube and I focus my attention on the beauty and love of Christ, but when the song ends my attention is immediately high jacked by a stupid commercial selling drugs or insurance or a political ad! I hate the commercials that steal my attention in between worship songs. (Some commercials are funny, but I hate commercialism!)

What are you paying attention to that takes your attention away from Jesus Christ and his love for you and plan for your life?

Don't pay attention to these two things or they will damage your faith:

Do not pay attention to the voice of the confused culture: 1 John 2:15-17. You can pay attention to the voice of the confused culture. It gets your attention through what you hear, watch, and read. Paying attention to the voice of the godless culture will lead you astray. The culture denies science and says gender isn't binary – male and female – XX & XY.

Do not pay attention to the voice of the accuser Satan: Revelation 12:10-12. In Revelation Satan is kicked out of heaven and thrown down to earth. Revelation 12:10-12: <sup>10</sup> *And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. <sup>11</sup> And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. <sup>12</sup> Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"*

There's a voice that accuses and condemns. There's a voice that convicts and restores. If you sin and pay attention to the accusing voice then it will push you away from God's love. If you sin and pay attention to the voice of the HS, then his gentle conviction will pull you toward God's love and forgiveness.

**Discipleship Lesson: Pay attention to the word of God and the voice of the HS speaking through the word or directly into your spirit.** We will learn more about this when we continue with the adventures of Philip in 2 weeks.

My *TrueLife* weekly testimony: Joseph @ Trader Joe's. He believes in God reading the Hebrew OT and Septuagint. Chris works for Regional One Medical Center. "Do you believe in God?" "Yes, I'm a Mason." I don't know what a Mason believes so I will need to do some research.