

Dundonald Youth: Acts

Week 10: Messengers not Magicians!

Open in prayer: Ask God to be with you, speaking to you through his word, helping you to trust Jesus Christ.

Opening Question: Do you find it easy or hard to talk to other people about Jesus? This is not a 'right answer' / 'wrong answer' question! We're all wired differently. God has given us different opportunities and situations. It's a genuine question to think about and answer! The question 'why?' is a good follow up to most questions / answers!

Read Acts 8:1-3

On what day? What happened? See Acts 7 - Stephen was been hauled in front of the Sanhedrin, and explains from Jewish history that Israel has constantly rejected God's appointed leaders, as they have by rejecting Jesus - the true temple! - and they're raging so they stone Stephen and the Christian church is persecuted.

What is the link between Acts 1:8 and Acts 8:1? Jesus said that his disciples would be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth... and now God is using this persecution, and scattering, to spread his messengers and the gospel out from Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria! Not how we'd have planned it, but God is good and can't be stopped!

We won't study Saul / Paul in this series, but take a look at the sub-heading above chapter 9! (When Pathfinders takes a break over the summer you might like to continue reading Acts to see what happens, and how Jesus continues to wonderfully act in Acts!)

Read Acts 8:4-8

Look up John 4:9. Why is Acts 8:5 so significant? Jews refused to have anything to do with Samaritans. Phillip is in Samaria, announcing the good news about Jesus, telling them that God's King has come and that they can be forgiven for their sins, and be included in God's family! That's HUGE!

What happened as the Christians were scattered? Why?

They preached (v4) - Because who Jesus is and what he's done is too good to keep to themselves, and people need to hear God's word in order to know and respond to the good news?!

People listened (v6) - Because it's an incredible message (esp. for Samaritans to be included?!) and being accompanied by signs and clear demonstration of God's power

Signs and healings (v6-7) - God authenticating his message - Jesus really IS alive, he really IS the Messiah, he really HAS power of evil and victory over Satan, people really WILL be healed in the New Creation.

Great joy (v8) - Because turning to Jesus as Lord and Saviour is wonderful & brings joy!

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Read Acts 8:9-25

Who are the characters in this episode, and what do they do? Why?

You can work through this section chronologically (Simon, Phillip, Simon, Peter & John, Simon, Peter) or taking one person at a time and drilling down into their involvement and what we see / learn.

The flow of the passage is: boastful Simon is superseded by a greater power (clue in v13 that Simon may not have genuinely turned to Jesus, rather fascinated by Phillips signs and wonders). The Apostles come from Jerusalem to verify that the *Samaritans* have become *Christians*, and publicly demonstrate (through the receipt of the Holy Spirit) that they are legit / true / equal with Jewish Christians. Simon reveals his true heart in v18-19, and Peter is forceful in his rebuke / call to repentance because this is a huge moment for the spread of the gospel (Samaritans included?!!) and this guy is way offbase. V24 is ambiguous about if Simon repents, or is still looking to humans for his own self-interest. Peter & John return to Jerusalem, preaching throughout Samaria as they return.

Do we need someone to lay hands on us in order to receive the Holy Spirit?

NO! This moment that we're reading about 2,000 years ago was a watershed moment, as the gospel began its spread from Jerusalem to Samaria. As we noted from John 4:9, this is a big deal (!) with serious cultural hostilities to overcome. God chose to delay the receiving of the Spirit so that the Apostles could publicly authenticate this moment, so that Jewish and Samaritan believers would know they were fully, truly accepted by God in the gospel! This isn't *normal* - see Acts 2:38 (+1 Cor 12:3)

NOW LISTEN TO THE TALK - Youth Bible Series: Acts 10

→ What most strikes you from today, and how do you want to pray?

Pray: Pray that we would be people who believe and share the gospel!

Listen/Sing: Saviour of the World - Newsboys (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqeONJmH-BQ>)

Meditate: Acts 8:25