

Acts 8: False Doctrines Refuted

Sunday PM 08/22/21

Introduction:

I have heard it said, you don't have to know the Greek or Hebrew language to refute false doctrines. Just look at the text of the Bible and then harmonize it with the rest of the Bible. There are a number of false doctrines refuted in **Acts 8**.

4 Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. 6 And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city. Acts 8:4-8

I) The Doctrine That One is Saved or Lost At Birth

A) Some teach the doctrine of predetermination

1. John Calvin defined it the following way- **"God, and for no other purpose than his good pleasure, predetermined (chose, elected, etc.) that some would be regenerated (born again) and place their faith in Christ."**
2. Westminster of Faith states it as -- **"Those of mankind that are predestined unto life, God, before the foundations of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace."**
3. Notice key words such as without any foresight of faith or good works. Meaning there is nothing one can do or not do so as to go to heaven.
4. Whatever God has determined cannot be altered. I am saved totally by God's grace.

B) Why were they preaching the Gospel?

1. As a useless exercise in futility – Peter in **Acts 2.40** *And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”*
2. Why were the Christians leaving Jerusalem preaching the word? Salvation is connected to the preaching of God's word.

21 *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. James 1:21*

3. The grace of God is connected to the word of God.

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, 14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

4. One passage puts this all together for us.

9 *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!” 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “LORD, who has*

believed our report?” 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:9-17

- 5, In **Acts 8** we have people obeying the Gospel of Christ in order to be saved, not because they had already been saved.

II) The Doctrine that Simon the Sorcerer Was Not A Christian

9 But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, 10 to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the great power of God.” 11 And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. 12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. 13 Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done. Acts 8:9-13

A) Some teach Simon was never a Christian, never believed, no saving faith.

1. They are upholding the doctrine of “once saved always saved”.
2. Problem arises because of Simon the Sorcerer.

But Peter said to him, “Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! 21 You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.” Acts 8:20-23

- 3, Obviously this describes a lost person, so they say he was never a Christian.

B) What had Simon heard, what had he done?

12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were

*baptized. **13** Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done. **Acts 8:12-13***

1. What had Simon heard? The same thing the men and women of Samaria had heard.
2. What had Simon believed? The same thing the men and women of Samaria had believed.
3. For what purpose was Simon baptized? For the same purpose the men and women of Samaria had been baptized.

16** He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. **Mark 16:16

38** Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **Acts 2:38

16** And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’ **Acts 22:16

4. Look at two passages which ties together our sins being taken away and our baptism into Christ:

*For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; **29** but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God. **Romans 2:28-29***

11** In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, **12** buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. **Colossians 2:11-12.

5. Simon did everything the men and women of Samaria did in response to the Gospel. If he was not a Christian, none of them were Christians.

III) Doctrine of Miraculous Gifts Today

A) Many believe in speaking in tongues, interpreters, faith healers.

1. They connected to having enough faith and the Holy Spirit coming upon them.
2. We recognize miracles occurred in the Bible.
3. They were for a specific purpose.

4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? Hebrews 2:4

4. Some believe they, through the Holy Spirit can do miracles today.

B) Look at our text.

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, 15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:14-17

1. Not a common thing, not everyone had this ability.
2. H.S. did not just jump on someone and overwhelm them.
3. By the laying on of the Apostles hands was the way imparted.
4. How many Apostles do we have around today? None!

IV) The Doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints

A) Impossibility of apostacy, once saved always saved.

1. Defined –
 - a. “God sovereignly decrees that none of his elect shall perish. As a result the goal of election is assured. All of the elect come to

repentance. All of the elect come to faith. All of the elect are saved. None of the elect perish.” R. C. Sproul

- b. “God never repents of his electing love.” Thomas Watson
- c. “God, by the exercise of his grace . . . infallibly prevents even the weakest saint from final apostasy.” Loraine Boettner

- 2. The problem is Simon in **Acts 8**.

22 Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity. 24 Then Simon answered and said, “Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me.” Acts 8:22-24

- 3. To get around this problem some teach Simon was a) not lost, or b) never saved.

B) Simon was a Christian who fell

- 1. How can one say Simon was not a Christian?
- 2. How else would you describe a lost person?
- 3. Simon understood his condition, **v. 24**.
- 4. Bible has many warnings to Christians concerning falling from grace.