



# EFFECTS OF THE GOSPEL

Transformation, Strongholds,  
and True Repentance

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Acts 8:4–40

1 Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. 3 But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. 4 Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.

Acts 8:1–4



# THE SPARK OF PERSECUTION

## THE CATALYST

Stephen's martyrdom ignites fierce resistance.

Saul ravages the early church, dragging men and women to prison.

## THE REACTION

The church is scattered, not silenced.

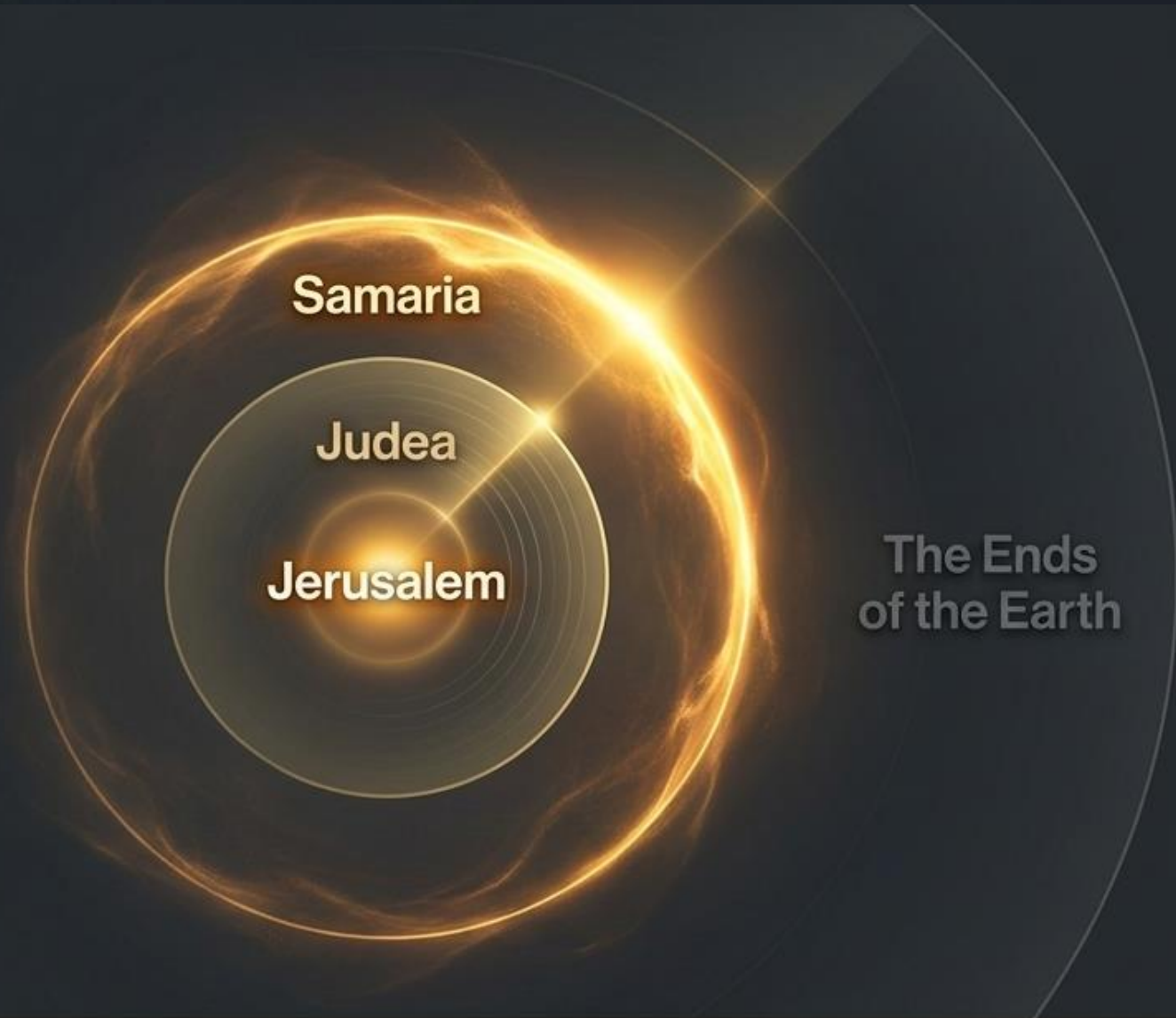
Instead of asking for safety, believers go everywhere preaching the word.

The attempt to crush the Gospel acts as an accelerant.

# The Outward Ripple

*“You shall be My witnesses  
both in Jerusalem, and in all  
Judea and Samaria...”*

— Acts 1:8



**Key Insight:** The miracle of the Gospel overcomes deep-seated racial and social barriers. By pushing Jewish believers into Samaritan territory, the Gospel acts as the ultimate equalizer, uniting people who historically hated one another.



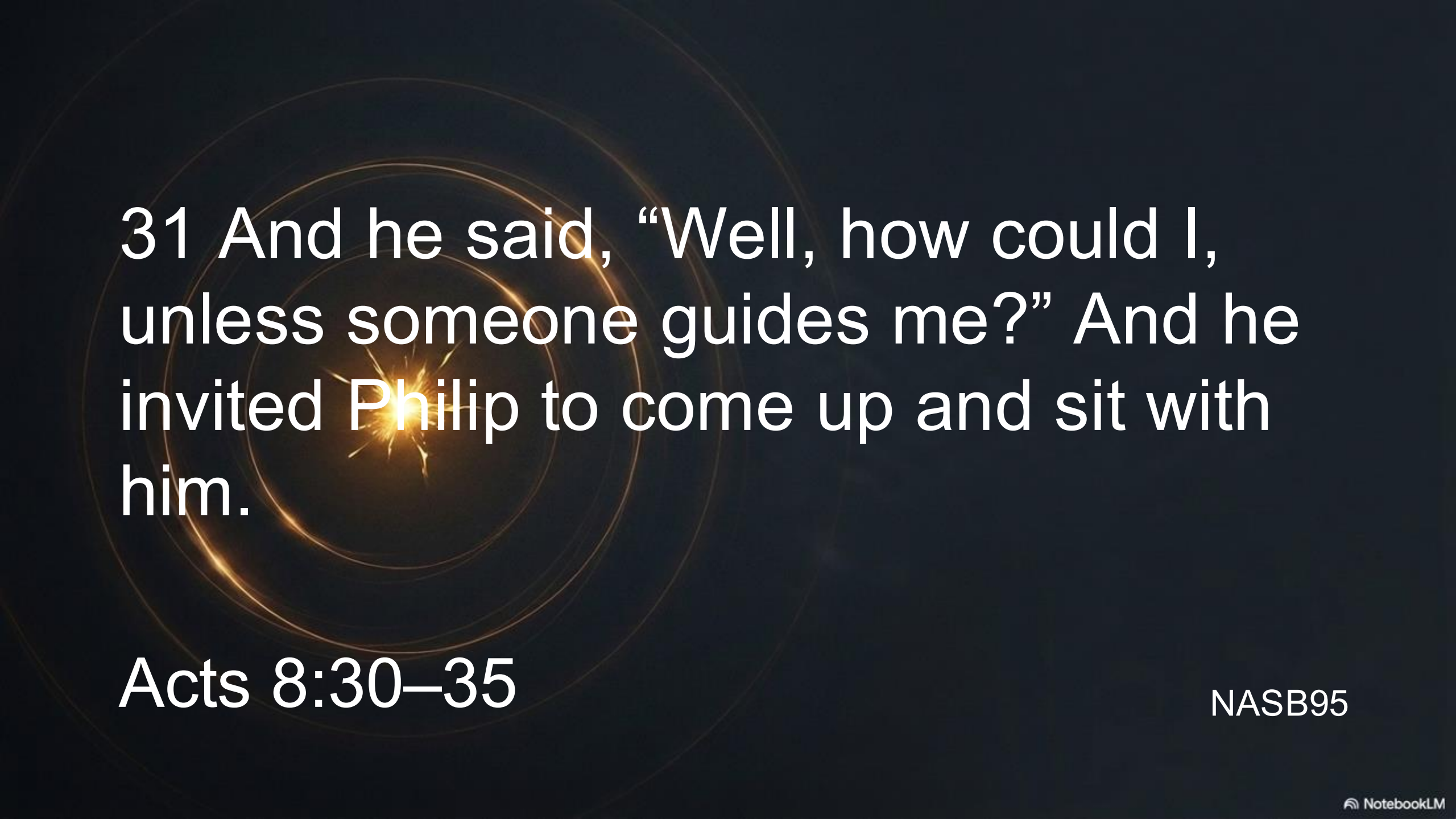
The Gospel is  
Effectual **Individually**

Acts 8:25-40

30 Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

Acts 8:30–35

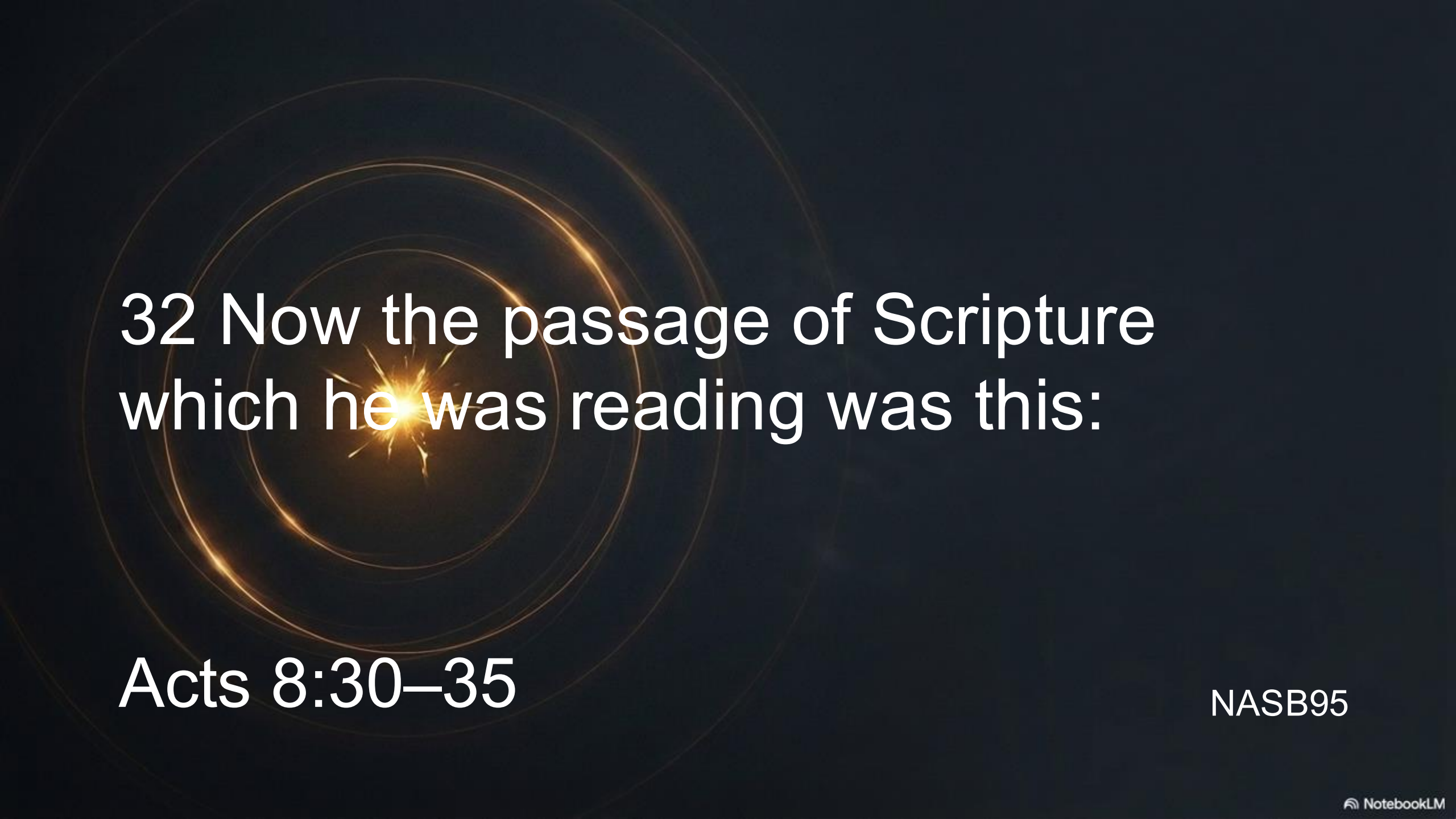
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31 And he said, “Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

Acts 8:30–35

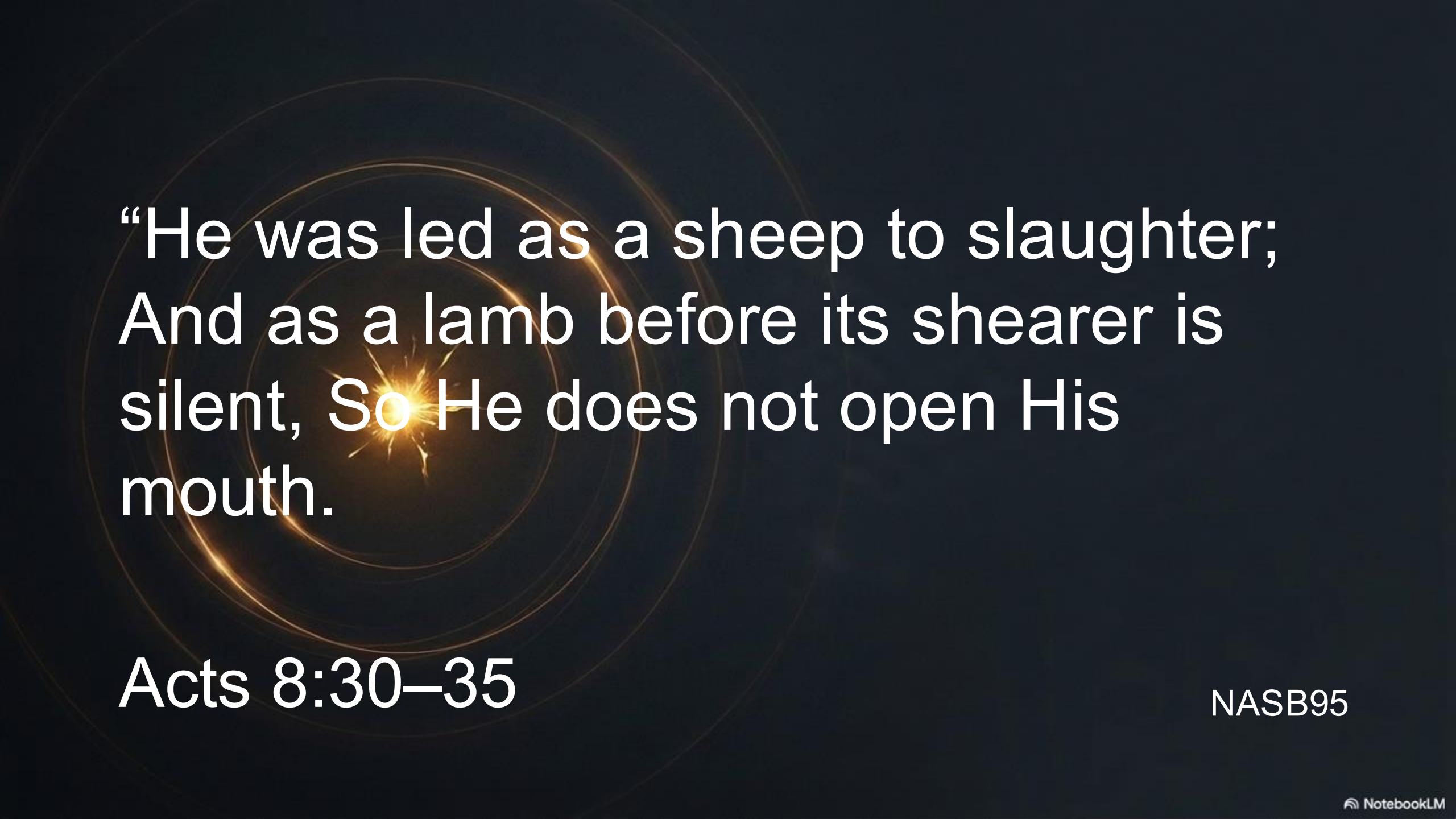
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32 Now the passage of Scripture  
which he was reading was this:

Acts 8:30–35

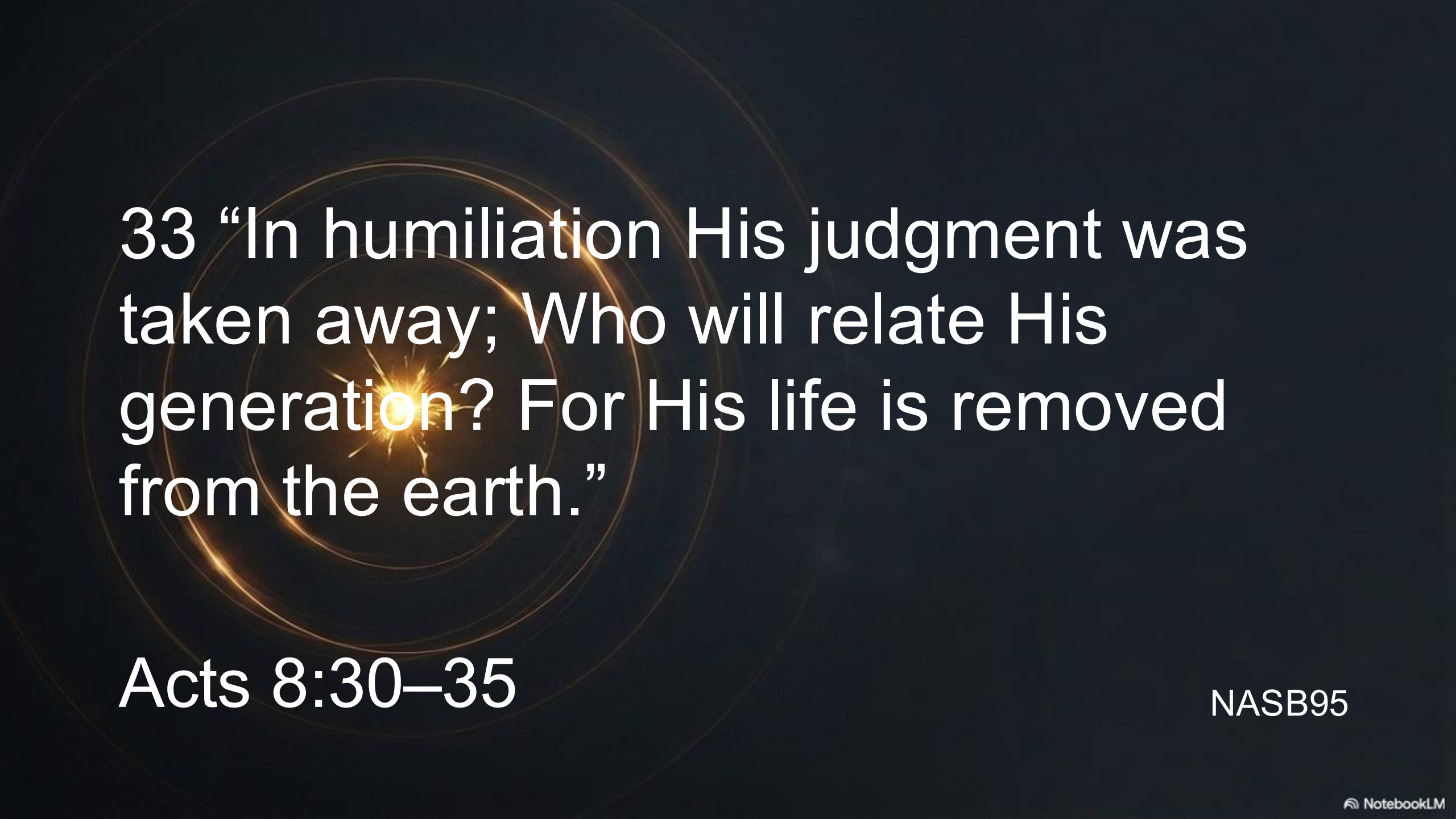
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“He was led as a sheep to slaughter;  
And as a lamb before its shearer is  
silent, So He does not open His  
mouth.

Acts 8:30–35

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33 “In humiliation His judgment was taken away; Who will relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth.”

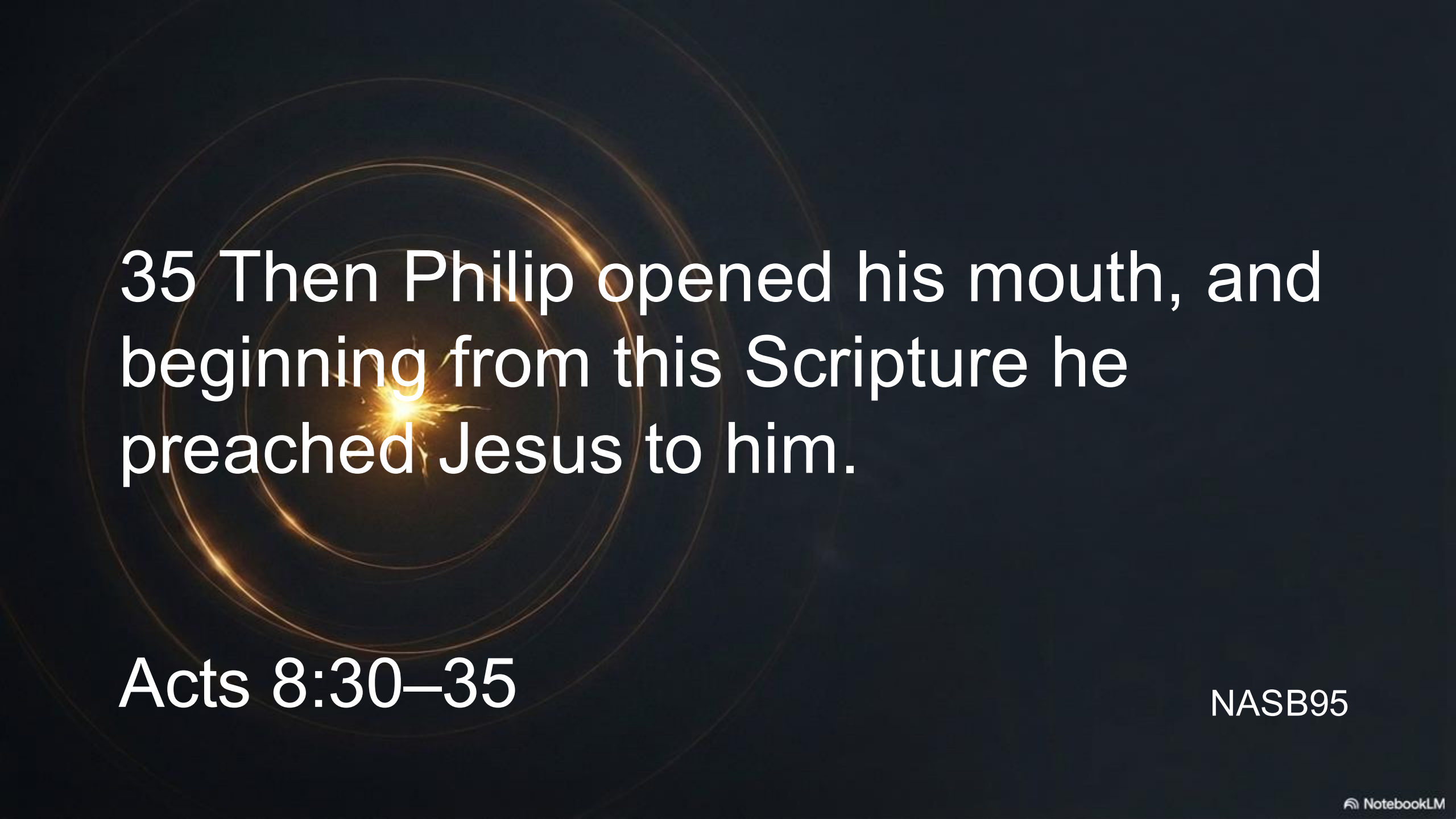
Acts 8:30–35

NASB95

34 The eunuch answered Philip and said, “Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?”

Acts 8:30–35

NASB95



35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.

Acts 8:30–35

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God cares about  
individual people

# The Gospel is for You, Personally

**The Divine Appointment:** God leads Philip away from the crowds to a desolate desert road for a single person.



**The Pursuit of Truth:** The Ethiopian official is reading Isaiah 53, needing a guide to understand.

**The Exchange:** Philip preaches Jesus from that exact scripture, overcoming the official's deep personal shame with saving faith.

**God cares about me personally.**

4 Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.

5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them.

Acts 8:4–5

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5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them.

6 The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing.

7 For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed.

8 So there was much rejoicing in that city.

**Acts 8:5–8**

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The Gospel is  
Effectual **Corporately**

Acts 8:4-24

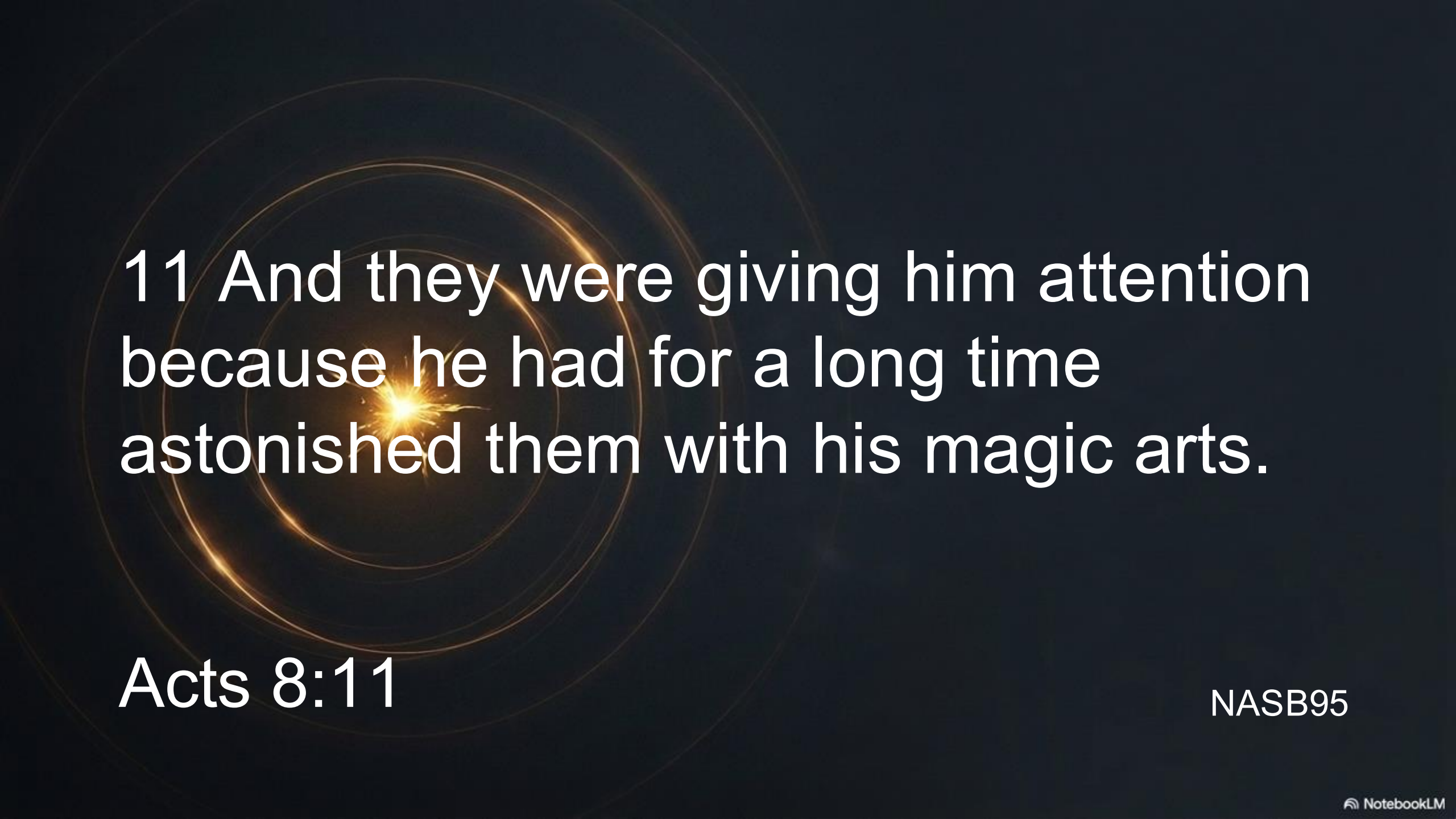


God cares about  
entire communities

9 Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great;  
10 and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, “This man is what is called the Great Power of God.”

Acts 8:9–10

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11 And they were giving him attention  
because he had for a long time  
astonished them with his magic arts.

Acts 8:11

NASB95

12 But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

Acts 8:12

NASB95

12 “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

Acts 4:12

NASB95



Communities  
are  
transformed

4 “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon,

5 ‘Build houses and live in them; and plant gardens and eat their produce.

6 ‘Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there and do not decrease.

7 ‘Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.’

Jeremiah 29:4–7

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# The Gospel is for Your Community

1

## The Samaria Effect

Proclaiming Christ brings physical healing, demonic deliverance, and profound unity to a divided place. The result: “Much rejoicing in that city.”

2

## Secondary Insight

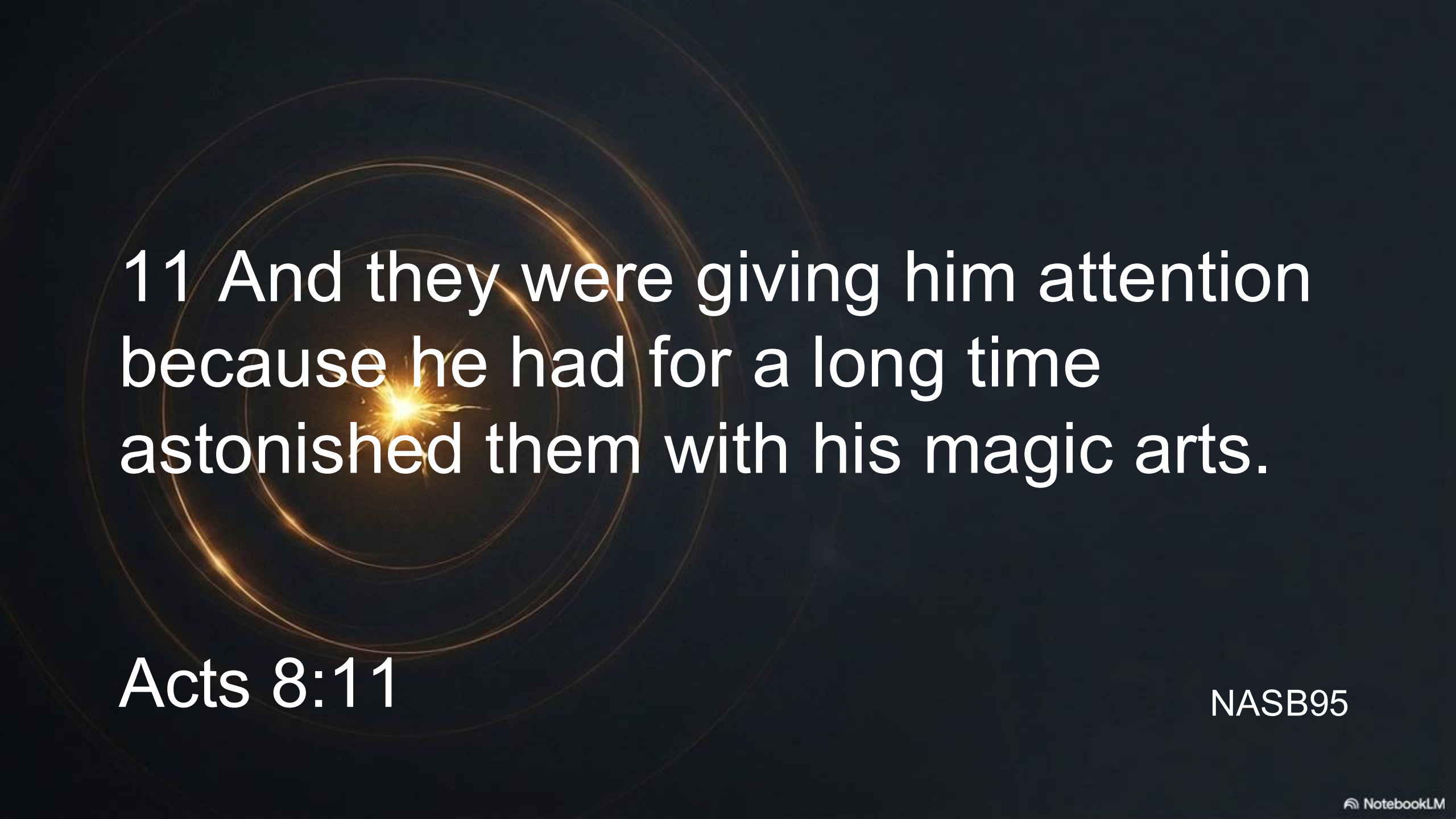
How do you dispel darkness? You turn on the lights. Communities are transformed when believers live lives informed by the Gospel and actively love those around them.

*“Seek the welfare of the city... for in its welfare you will have welfare.” — Jeremiah 29:7*

**God cares about my community.**



The Gospel is  
Effectual in the  
**Tearing Down**  
of Strongholds



11 And they were giving him attention  
because he had for a long time  
astonished them with his magic arts.

Acts 8:11

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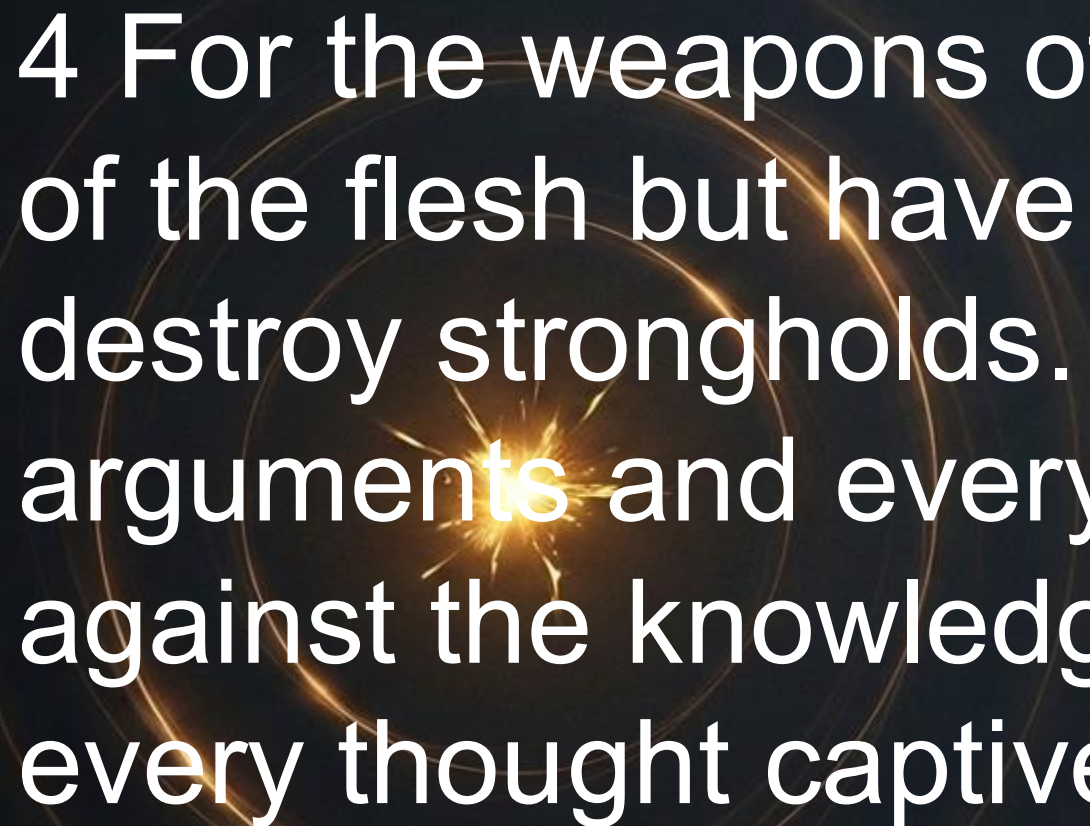


# The Gospel as a Weapon

**Stronghold** [noun] – A place where a false belief is fiercely defended. (e.g., The city of Samaria held captive by Simon’s magic arts).

**We aren’t going to change our city with protests and rallies alone. Our community will be changed by the Gospel.**

*“For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.”*  
— 2 Corinthians 10:4



4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

2 Corinthians 10:4–5

ESV

13 Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed.

14 Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John,

15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

16 For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

17 Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:13–17

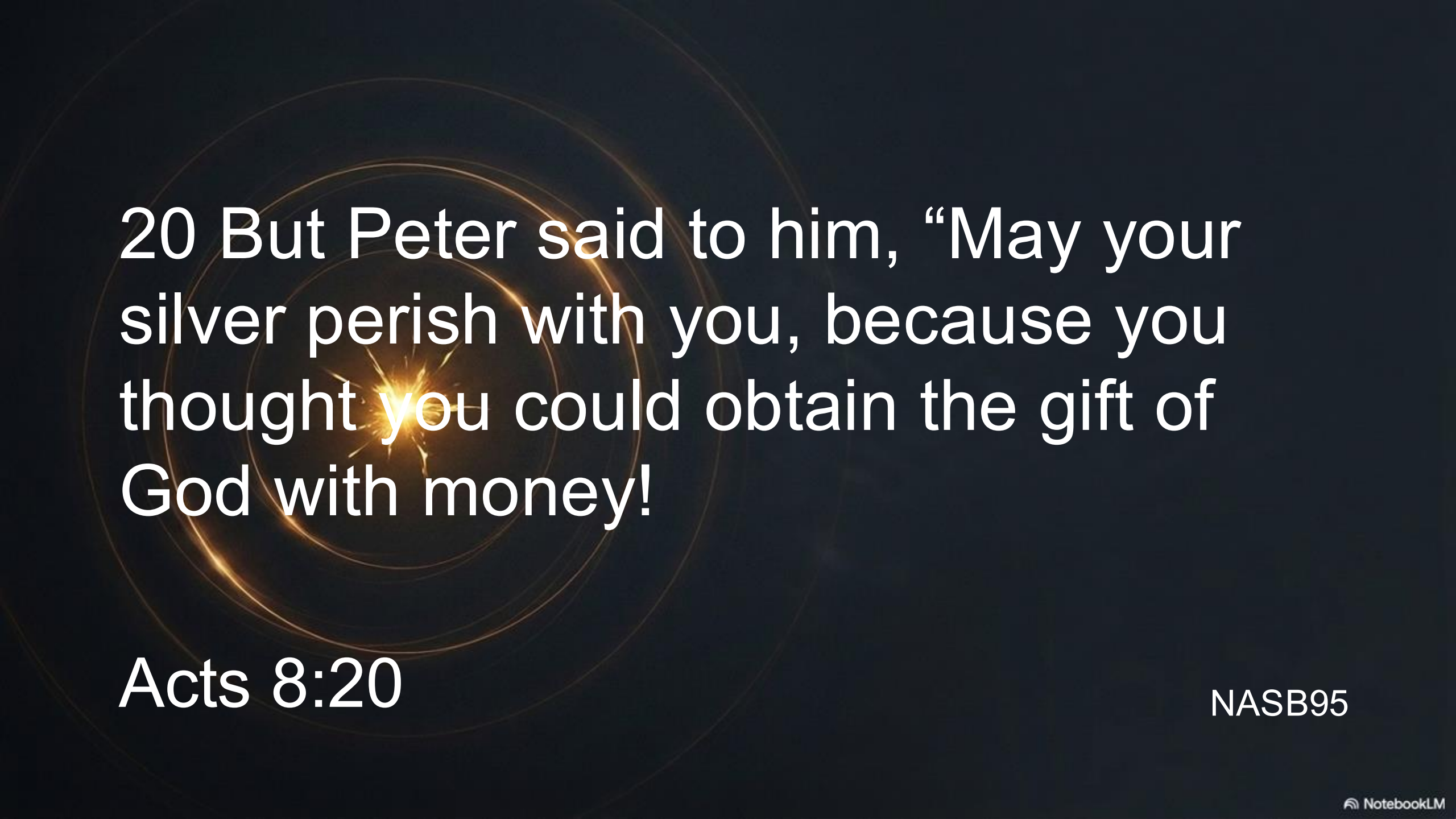
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18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money,

19 saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Acts 8:18–19

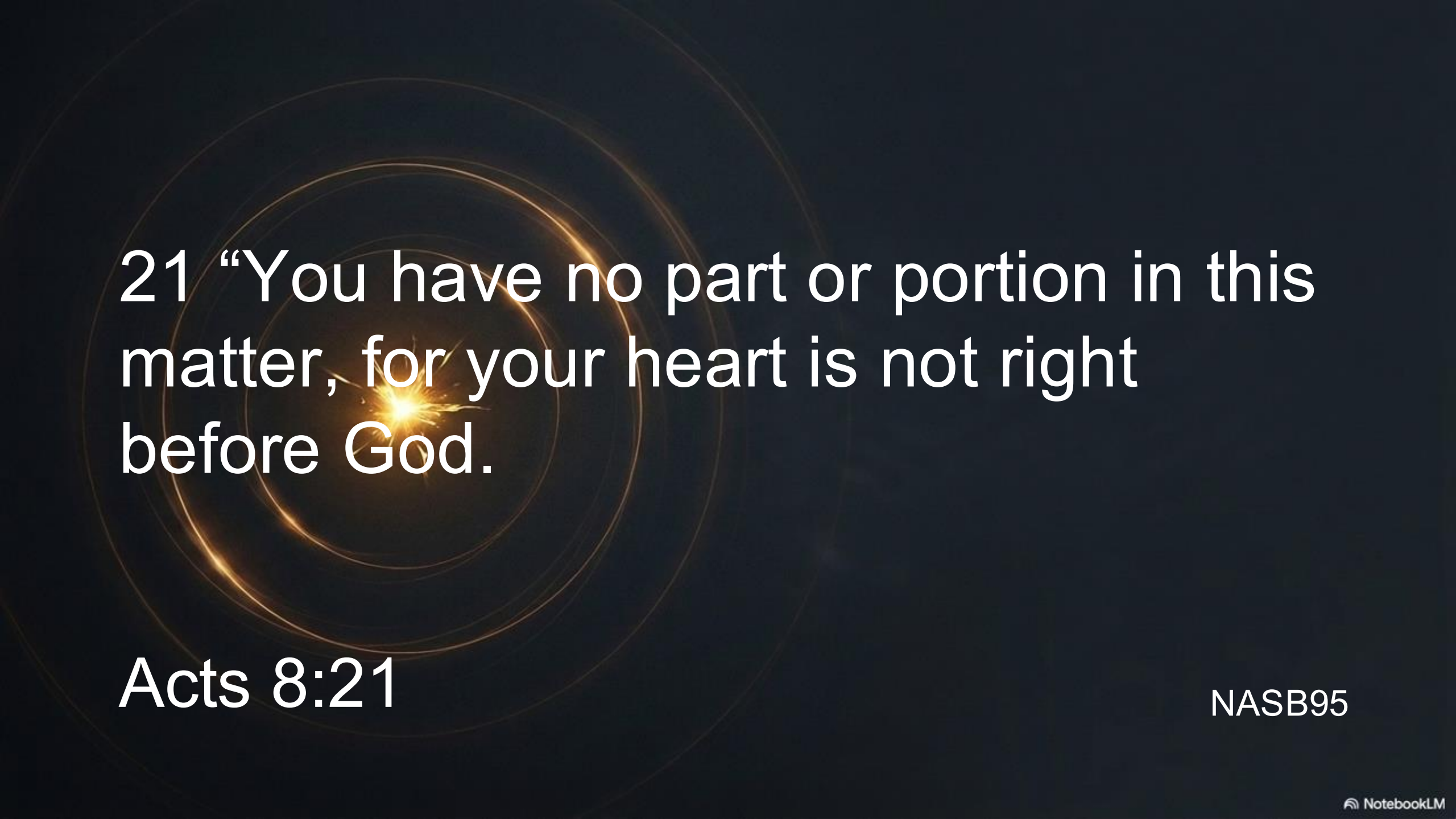
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20 But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!

Acts 8:20

NASB95



21 “You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.

Acts 8:21

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# The Transactional Trap



VS



THE OFFER	THE REBUKE	DIAGNOSTIC
<p>Simon sees the Holy Spirit bestowed through the Apostles' hands and attempts to buy the authority with money.</p>	<p>"May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!" — Peter (Acts 8:20)</p>	<p>Motive is key. Do we want God's power to be 'somebody great,' or out of a deep love for His glory?</p>

# The Gospel is for Your Heart Motive

**God cares about my heart motive**



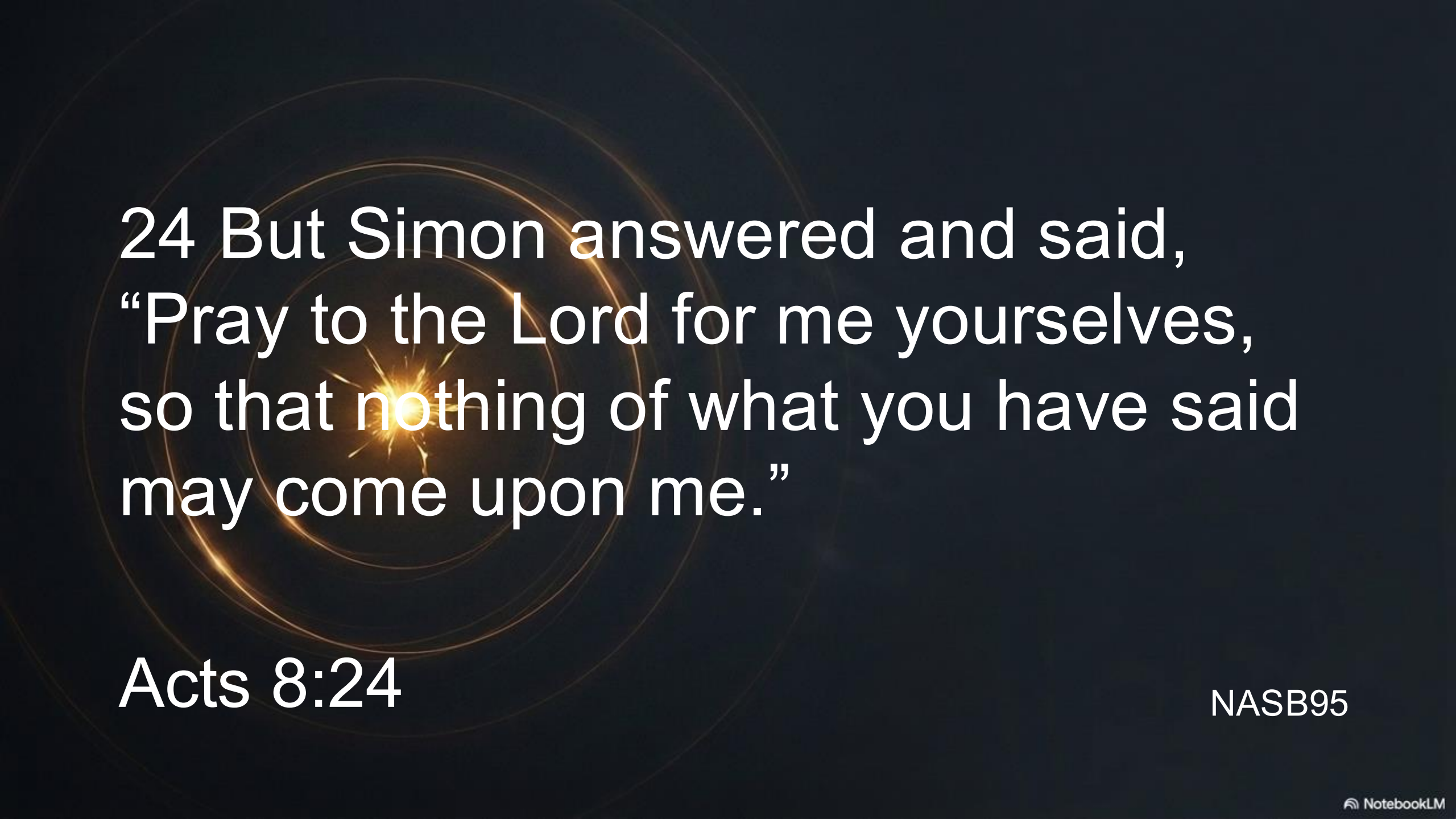
True obedience flows from love, not just duty or fear.

**Key Insight:** Our actions are judged not just by what we do, but by why we do it. The Gospel seeks to transform our desires and intentions, aligning them with God's will.

22 “Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 “For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity.”

Acts 8:22

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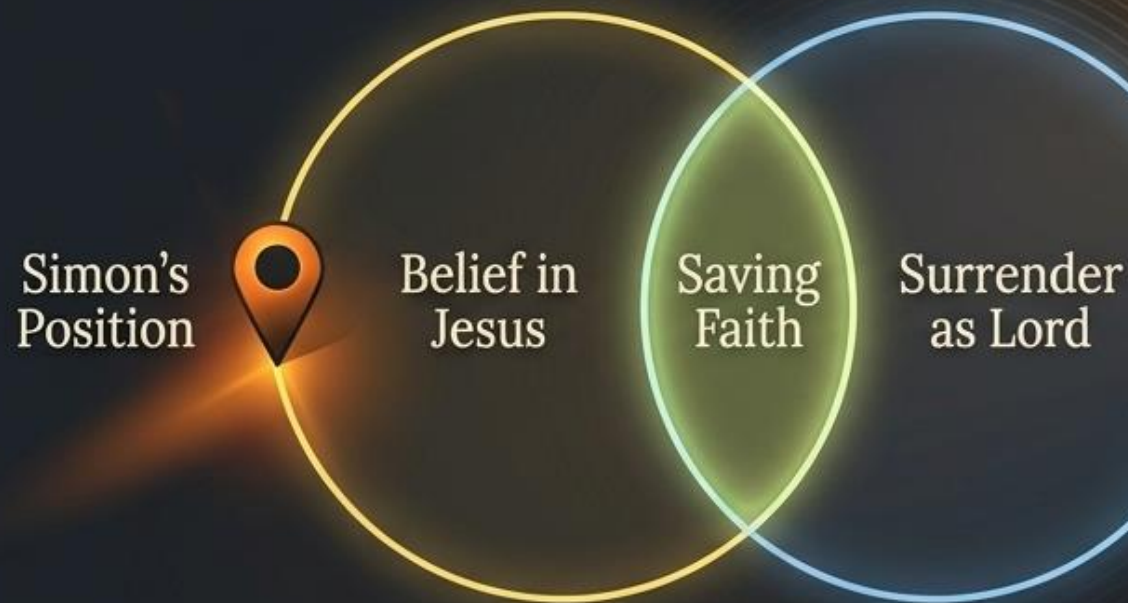


24 But Simon answered and said,  
“Pray to the Lord for me yourselves,  
so that nothing of what you have said  
may come upon me.”

Acts 8:24

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# The Illusion of Unsurrendered Belief



## THE WARNING

It is possible to believe in Jesus and not be saved. Wanting the miracles and benefits of God without submitting to the will of God is a deadly trap.

## SCRIPTURAL PROOF

“You believe that God is one... the demons also believe, and shudder.” — James 2:19

# A Contrast of Hearts

	The Eunuch	Simon the Sorcerer
The Pursuit	Pursued an understanding of Scripture and truth.	Pursued the mechanics of miracles and personal authority.
The Posture	Humility ("How can I understand, unless someone guides me?").	Pride and Entitlement ("Give this authority to me...").
The Result	Joyful surrender and salvation.	Bondage, the "gall of bitterness," and fear of consequences.

Simon is thoroughly frightened by Peter's words, but shows no sign of personal repentance or change of heart. He wants to escape the penalty for his sin and hopes that Peter can avert it. Peter had clearly diagnosed his case. He was an unconverted man in spite of his profession of faith and baptism. There is no evidence that he ever changed his life at all

Word Pictures in the New Testament

30 “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct,” declares the Lord God. “Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you.

31 “Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel?

32 “For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,” declares the Lord God. “Therefore, repent and live.”

**Ezekiel 18:30–32**

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# The Missing Element: Repentance

## WHAT IT IS NOT

Simon was terrified by Peter's words, but only wanted to escape the penalty. Repentance is not just feeling guilty or asking someone else to pray away the consequences.



## WHAT IT IS

A complete 180-degree turn away from sin. Casting away transgressions and making Jesus Christ the Lord of your life (Ezekiel 18).

**God cares about my repentance.**

# The Gospel Effects Framework

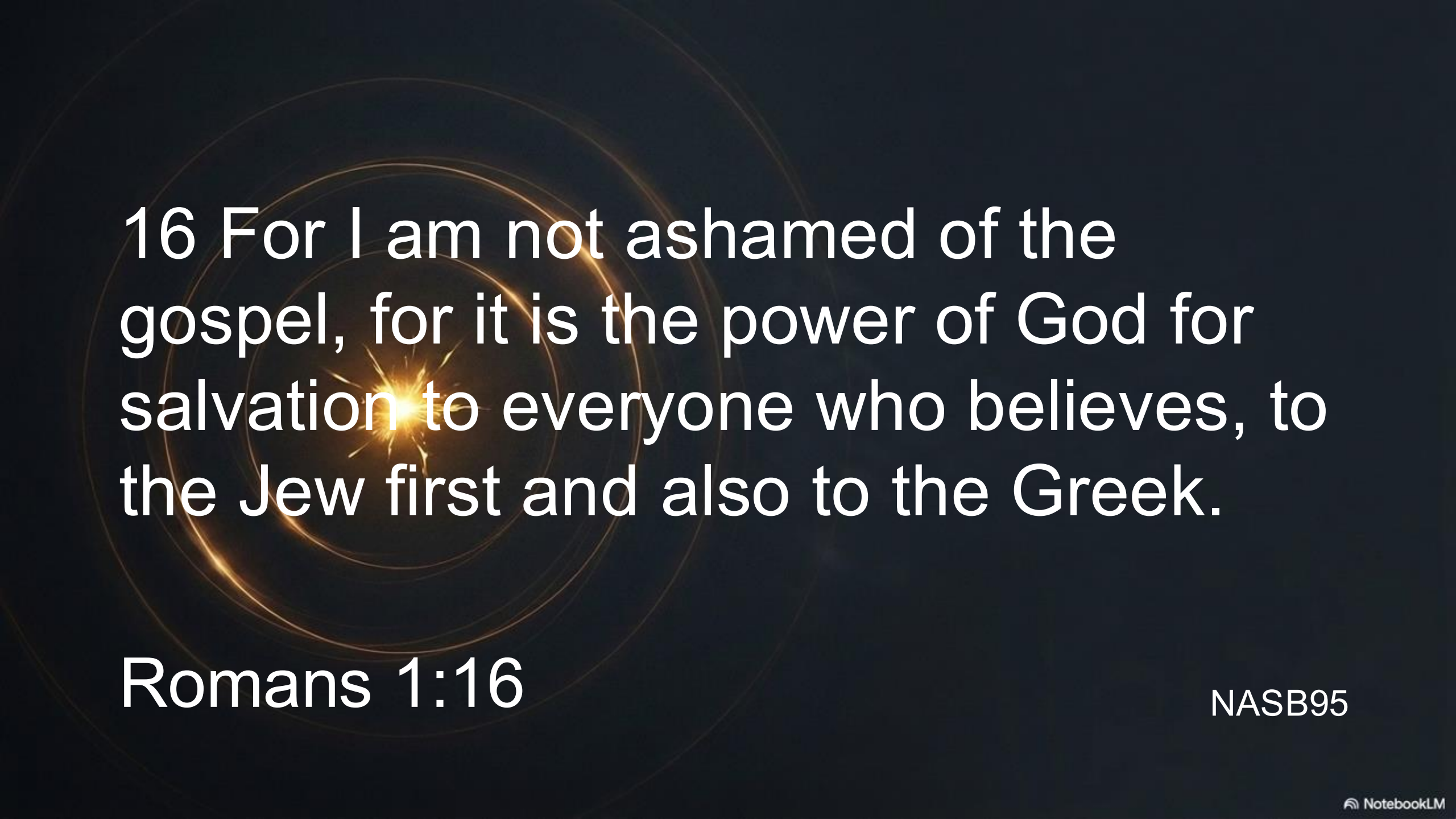
**Effectual  
for You  
(Individual)**

**Effectual  
for Your  
Community  
(Corporate)**

**Effectual  
against  
Darkness  
(Tearing down  
strongholds)**

**Genuine Repentance & Surrender**

*This unstoppable power is only accessed through a heart that has made a 180-degree turn toward Jesus as Lord.*



16 For I am not ashamed of the  
gospel, for it is the power of God for  
salvation to everyone who believes, to  
the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Romans 1:16

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# Grace Abounds

**Simon's egregious sin did not preclude him  
from the grace and forgiveness of God.**

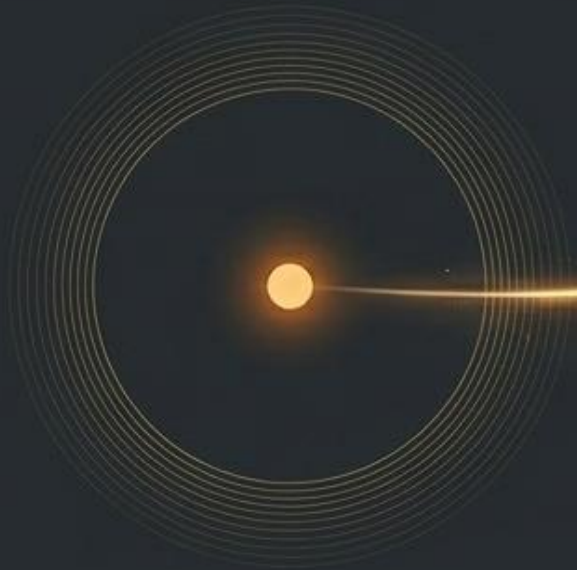
**Peter offered him a path back.**

**Your sin does not preclude you.**

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**Where sin abounds, grace  
abounds all the more.**

# The Scope of Transformation



Effectual  
Individually



Effectual  
Corporately



Effectual in Tearing  
Down Strongholds



# Where Are You?

Have you believed in Jesus without surrendering to Him as Lord?

Are you responding like Simon, seeking the benefits while avoiding the surrender?

Or are you responding like the Eunuch, with joyful, total repentance?

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The Gospel is for you. The Gospel is for your community. The Gospel is for your repentance.