

## Simon's Magic and Money Not Enough

Acts 9:9-25 <sup>9</sup> But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. <sup>10</sup> They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great." <sup>11</sup> And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. <sup>12</sup> But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. <sup>13</sup> Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

<sup>14</sup> Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, <sup>15</sup> who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, <sup>16</sup> for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup> Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup> Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, <sup>19</sup> saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." <sup>20</sup> But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! <sup>21</sup> You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. <sup>22</sup> Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. <sup>23</sup> For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." <sup>24</sup> And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

<sup>25</sup> Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

### ❖ Recap

- **Persecution has come upon the church through the Jewish Leaders**
  - After the stoning of Stephen they ramp up the pressure
  - They are using Saul as their wrecking crew
  - It is like an episode of Star Wars... Where the evil empire is hunting down the good guys
- **The church scatters and spreads the gospel where they go**
  - The default actions of the persecuted believers
  - Was to tell people about Jesus wherever they go

### ❖ Introduction

- **There is much to say within these verses**
  - There are a lot of theological questions to be answered in them
  - Very important questions to be answered
  - It is a place where we could get bogged down for quite sometime
  - Trying to understand what is going on
- **We can question if Simon really believed, and if he didn't why did Luke say he believed**
  - And then turn around and hear Peter say Simon has no part in the gospel
- **We can also question why did the apostles Peter and John have to come down**
  - To lay hands on them so they would receive the Holy Spirit
  - We understand it that that happens at salvation
  - What is going on there
  - Why does it happen through their laying on of hands
  - And why does it occur after their believing?
- **Which also makes us wonder what kind of faith people of Samaria had before Peter and John came**
  - So you see there is much to clear up
  - And it could take some time, because we would have to look at it from many ways

- And give arguments each way so we could fully understand it
- **But I am not going to go that route this morning**
  - Because At the same time there is some great application
  - There are some great things for us to glean from these verses this morning
  - And apply in our own life
- **I do not think Luke wrote this section so we would get bogged down**
  - In the theological arguments this morning.
  - Not that they are not important because they are
  - And I do intend to address them.
  - Just not to the fullest extent that I would like...
- **I believe God inspired Luke to write these verses**
  - So we would see how the church is to **operate in spreading the gospel**
  - So people from generation to generation would **be warned on how** to receive the gospel
  - And that people need to make **sure their calling and election** is sure
    - Make sure they have not believed with a **non saving belief**
- **I can not Stress Enough**
  - These verses should serve as a warning to all of us
  - They should also serve as an example to us as to what we should expect
    - Out of those who are called Christians

#### ❖ Outline:

- **1) Simon's Problem Before Believing**
- **2) Many People Believe and Simon Believes**
- **3) The Apostles and the Holy Spirit Come**
- **4) Simon's Problem After Believing**
- **5) Simon's Plea**
- **6) The Preaching of the Gospel Continues**
  
- **Really want to focus on Simon here...**
  - On Simon's heart before and after believing
  - There are other things to look at a long the way
  - But that will be the heart of the matter
    - We will also look a bit into the receiving of the Spirit

#### ❖ Simon's Problem Before Believing

- <sup>9</sup> But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. <sup>10</sup> They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great." <sup>11</sup> And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.
- **What was Simon Like:**
  - Previously Practiced Magic
  - Amazed People of Samaria
  - Called Himself great
  - People said he was the Power of God that is Called Great
- **Simon was a Demonic Magician Who Loved Himself**
  - I think the easiest way to know what kind of person he is
  - Is by looking at what the people had been saying about him
  - "This man is the power of God that is called Great"
  - They thought he was God

- **Why did they think this?**
  - Because Simon wanted them to think this
  - I do not know if He thought it himself
  - I know He wanted others to think it
- **Simon worshipped an Idol**
  - And it was himself...
  - And He cause the people to worship and idol... him
- **Simon did not follow the One True God**
  - He had set himself up as an idol to the people and to himself
- **People were mesmerized by him**
  - It said everyone paid attention to him
  - He was a very big deal to them
  - And this is not surprising for these people
    - They were like this, they had a history of worshipping false gods...
- **But, something is about to happen**
  - The gospel is about to come to Samaria
  - Jesus is about to infiltrate the land of idols

#### ❖ **Many People Believe and Simon Believes**

- <sup>12</sup> But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. <sup>13</sup> Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.
- **How a word is used is so important.**
  - Sometimes it may mean one thing and at other times it means something else.
  - Sometimes a word is only understood after carefully considering the content surrounding it
- **They (the people) believed Philip**
  - as he preached the good news
  - about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ
- **Even Simon Believed – (But Simon was not truly saved)... yet... He was**
  - Baptized and continued with Philip
    - Proof Against Baptismal Regeneration
      - ◆ Or the idea that baptism saves a person
  - Amazed by great signs and miracles
- **Luke uses the same word to describe the true faith of the Samaritans**
  - And the false faith of Simon
  - Pisteuo – and it means to believe or to trust... and becomes synonymous with believing in Jesus
  - When you look thoroughly at the content surrounding their belief
  - You see fairly clearly that their belief was true and his was false
- **The Difference between the Samaritans and Simon**
  - Samaritans
    - believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ
  - Simon
    - And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.
    - I want to come back to an important point regarding this in a minute...
- **I think Luke describes them this way as an indicator of their thought process**
  - The emphasis for the Samaritans was on the good news about the kingdom and Jesus

- The emphasis for Simon was his amazement at the signs and miracles
- **Let's break... and come back in a minute... lets look at what happens next**
  - So we can understand what happens with Simon

## ❖ **The Apostles and the Holy Spirit Come**

- **<sup>14</sup> Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, <sup>15</sup> who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, <sup>16</sup> for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup> Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.**
- **Questions:**
  - I thought they had already believed
  - Why didn't they already have the Holy Spirit
  - If you don't have the Holy Spirit you can not know Jesus can you?
  - **Is there a second filling of the Spirit I need to be seeking and praying for?**
    - On a side note... I have certainly thought through this
    - Because I do not want us to be hindered in our walk with God
    - Because we do not have the Holy Spirit like we should
    - Because we have ignored these verses
    - So, if we needed that, I would certainly want to teach that...
- **So, Here is where we could sit for hours and debate what is going on**
  - And I will admit, it is confusing...
  - It has made my head spin and made me ask God what is going on
  - Understanding the Holy Spirit is one of the more difficult doctrines in the whole Bible
  - Therefore, do not feel discouraged when you struggle with it
  - Many great preachers and teachers through Christianity did so as well
- **Let me just share with you what I think is going on here...**
  - And if you want to look at every side of it you are welcome to do so as well
- **Nothing is simple when it comes to the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts**
  - And forming your doctrine in regards to Him
  - Solely from the book of Acts is very difficult
- **Think about what Jesus said about the Spirit**
  - **John 3:8 <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."**
  - The Spirit is free to do as He wishes for His purposes
  - And we can not tell Him otherwise
- **But, I think the position held by the church throughout much of history**
  - And many great theologians today will help us understand what is going on
- **The initial stages of Christianity brought about many new things**
  - That would not happen again, or would not happen again in that way
  - In the same way that the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples
    - After they knew Jesus
    - After He had made them clean
  - He comes to another group of people, the Samaritans
- **God is bringing these two groups together**
  - **They already truly know Jesus through the preaching of Philip**
    - But God has waited before giving them the Spirit
    - In the same way He waited before giving the apostles the Spirit
    - Didn't mean the Spirit was absent in their salvation by any means

- Because He had to have been there
- Convicting their hearts and working in them to believe

➤ **So... God is making a point**

- After years of hostility and competing religions
- God is showing there will be unity within the church
- There will be no difference between the Jewish believers
- And the Samaritan believers...

➤ **God is creating a scene here**

- Where He is bringing His Spirit through His apostles Peter and John from Jerusalem
- God is showing His intentions in regards to the Samaritans

➤ **There are three distinct groups that receive the Holy Spirit**

- The Jewish Apostles
- The Samaritans
- The Gentiles (which we will see in ch 10)

➤ **There was no power in John and Peter's hands**

- The Laying on of hands was not what brought the Spirit
- It was a gift from God
- The laying on of hands was **God's way** to demonstrate the coming of the Spirit at this time
- There was no magic in the hands of Peter and John
- In the same way that their healing of the lame man was a power from Jesus and not them

➤ **They prayed for the Samaritans...**

- The coming of the Spirit was likely in response to that as well as the believing of the Samaritans

➤ **So, that is all we have time to say about that**

- Let's Bring it back to application to us
- It is great to know things about the Bible
- But, if you never apply it in your own life, you are no better off than Simon the Magician

➤ **The Holy Spirit Came and it was a known Experience**

- The apostles spoke in tongues and praised God
- Cornelius and His family did the same
- Not sure what the Samaritans did, but it was noticeable enough for it to be recorded
- But not everyone spoke in tongues upon conversion...
- Not everyone was given the ability to do great signs and wonders...
- There is a common thread among those who receive the Holy Spirit

➤ **Focus: What is the Promise Given to the Disciples by Jesus**

- When He tells them they would receive the Holy Spirit
- That they would receive power to be witnesses
  - In acts 1:8 that is what He says
- Those that have received the Holy Spirit will receive power for witness
- It is in the DNA of believers to be a witness
  - Are you suppressing your true self
  - Do you not have power to witness because you do not have the Spirit

➤ **The Holy Spirit brings about**

- Obedience to the Word of God
- And a Desire and power to Witness about Jesus

❖ **Simon's Problem After Believing**

- <sup>18</sup> Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, <sup>19</sup> saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands

may receive the Holy Spirit.”<sup>20</sup> But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!<sup>21</sup> You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.<sup>22</sup> Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you.<sup>23</sup> For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.”

➤ **Simon Offers Money for the power of giving the Spirit**

- Peter calls it a gift from God
- And tells Simon that his money can perish with him
  - Indicating initially that Simon is not a true believer

➤ **Simon was looking at the gift and not the giver**

- **And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.**
- **He was amazed by the signs and miracles Philip was performing**
  - He did not see the Jesus behind them
  - He did not notice that the miracles and signs were pointing him to Jesus
- **He was so caught up in himself and his own powers**
  - That He was in awe of the signs...
  - So that He was blinded to Jesus...
- **This is a very real threat even today**
  - People can get so into the show surrounding Christianity
  - The sermon production
  - The personality of the speaker
  - The feeling of the crowd... the sound of the music
  - The atmosphere...
  - And they can be moved... and moved greatly...
- **Yet they totally miss out on the truth behind it all...**
  - The Jesus who came to save

➤ **Then We See Simon’s Heart Problem “After Believing”**

- 1) You have neither part or lot in this matter
- 2) Heart is not right before God
- 3) Repent of this wickedness
- 4) Pray that the intent of your heart may be forgiven you
- 5) In the Gall of bitterness
- 6) In the Bond of Iniquity

❖ **We Must Ask Ourselves the Question**

- Why does God put this in the Bible
- Why does He put verses that talk about people who believe
  - Yet they are not saved
- The view point of the author
  - Luke’s viewpoint is important here
  - As is ours
  - When a person hears the gospel and responds by believing it
    - Even to the point of baptism
    - We think that person has believed...
  - Luke and those He got his info from saw it the same way
    - Simon was a guy who initially believed from their view point
- The Viewpoint of God is what is of most importance
  - Although to everyone around it seems that Simon believes
  - It is obvious that his belief is not a saving belief

➤ **I have said this before:**

- Let me say it again
  - There is a belief that does not save
- Jesus dealt with this in **John 2 when he did not give himself to some who had believed**
- He dealt with it in **John 8 when some believe, but he later calls them children of the devil**
- John says **there are people that were with us, but leave and prove they never were of us**
- Jesus describes them in the parable of the sower
  - **Matt 13:20-21 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, <sup>21</sup> yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.**

➤ **Maybe that is you in here today...**

- **Maybe you are a great guy or girl**
- **Been serving here for years**
- **Maybe right now everyone around you thinks you are saved**
- **But you know in your heart...**
  - **You have never repented...**
  - **You do not have the Holy Spirit living within you**
  - **You know you are not saved**

➤ **Let's look closely at Simon's Heart Problem**

- **1) You have neither part or lot in this matter**
  - In the same way that some Jewish people in the past
  - Did not receive inheritance...
  - They would have not part or lot in the inheritance
  - Peter is describing his association with the Word
- **2) Heart is not right before God**
  - God changes the heart...
  - He promises to replace our old hear and give us a new one
  - Simon's heart was not right with God
- **3) Repent of this wickedness**
  - He was living in open wickedness
    - ◆ Peter could see it...
    - ◆ Peter knew the condition of this man because God revealed it to him
- **4) Pray that the intent of your heart may be forgiven you**
  - We learn here that even the intentions of his heart are wrong
  - And God judges the thoughts of our hearts right?
  - Isn't that what we know about the word of God... it discerns even the thoughts of our hearts
- **5) In the Gall of bitterness**
  - This is his condition...
  - Gall means something bitter... a bitter substance
  - Bitterness – is the taste of something bitter
  - So he was in the bitter substance of bitterness
  - His condition was one against God and for Himself...
  - In some way He was bitter toward God, or Philip or the apostles for their power
  - He had an envious condition about him...
    - ◆ Likely because he saw himself as great, and wanted the power of the apostles...
    - ◆ Wondering why he did not have it
- **6) In the Bond of Iniquity**

- He was captured and imprisoned in sin...
- He was bound up in it... enslaved to it...
- And only the seeing the Jesus of the gospel message could free him

➤ **So in the End:**

- Simon's condition was no different before his believing than it was after

❖ **Simon's Plea**

- <sup>24</sup> And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

➤ **There is much written about a guy named Simon from early church historians and leaders**

- But, we can not be sure of some of it...
- Some think He totally went of the deep end and started
- What is known as Gnosticism.... Which is a heresy
- Others think those that believed that just used Simon's name
- So they could be connected to the early church...
  - Who knows...
  - What we do know is this...

➤ **He asked Peter to intercede for him**

- And that is not all bad...
- It shows that what Peter said to him made an impact...
  - Example: Ill never understand this mindset
  - It is between you and God
  - I hear it all the time... I need you to make sure I don't go to hell...
    - Well, you are on your way if you think I can keep you out...
    - Put a good word in for me with the big man...

➤ **Simon's reaction**

- Should have been instantly falling down on his face before God
- And repenting of his love of power and money and self...
- His reactions shows He was still looking at the men, and the signs and the miracles
- And not the God behind them...
  - He was not looking to Jesus

➤ **What about you?**

- Do you like this Christianity thing
- The sermons, the books, the singing, the people...
- These are just objects that have been changed by the Master
- The real focus is to be on Jesus

❖ **The Preaching of the Gospel Continues**

- <sup>25</sup> Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

➤ A transition verse...

➤ It continues... because that is what the church does

➤ And we will next see Philip continuing his sharing Jesus with whoever he can find

❖ **Invitation**