

Acts Part 23 – Simon the Sorcerer

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney Wednesday, February, 24, 2016

Last week we looked at verses 5-13 and where we witness the preaching ministry of Philip and we were introduced to a man named, Simon the Sorcerer. We find Philip preaching in the country of Samaria, a place the Jews usually avoided, but since Jesus commanded that Christians go into all the world and preach the Gospel unto every creature and he even told the disciples just before he ascended into heaven in **Acts 1:8: But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**

We dealt with the first Church heretic, Simon the Sorcerer, who made a confession of faith, was baptized, and followed Philip, however, we find that his confession is not real as his interests were in how he could advance his powers and was only interested in the miracles of the Holy Ghost, more of which we will cover tonight.

† Acts 8:14-25

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

So, word has spread all the way to Jerusalem about the great revival that had broken out in Samaria. Upon hearing that, the two greatest preachers of the time, Peter and John, are sent out to evaluate the situation to see that what was happening was authentic or not and to help out where needed. Where it says **“they sent unto them,”** this is referring to the Apostles still in Jerusalem which made up the mother Church. No doubt they got together, prayed, and made the decision on who to send and with this being a very important event, they of course wanted to send out the most experienced with being able to deal with this. So, they send out Peter and John.

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

Alright, so we need to deal with this section concerning receiving the Holy Ghost. A lot of folks are really confused about this and what it means. They assume that the Holy Ghost did not reside in the early believers of Christ at first, but that is absolutely untrue. Conversion has always been the same in the life of a believer and that is:

1. The Holy Ghost convicts you that you are a lost sinner in need of a Savior.
2. You repent – that means that you turn from your sins and to Jesus Christ to save you.
3. Immediately upon acceptance of Christ as Savior the Holy Ghost then moves inside of you to guide you in your walk with Christ.

So, every believer is indwelt with the Holy Ghost immediately upon conversion. But, what about this statement, “prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for as yet he was fallen upon none of them”? Does this imply that they were saved without the Holy Ghost convicting them and indwelling within them? Absolutely not.

I want you to understand that being indwelt with the Holy Ghost at the moment of salvation is not the same as the Holy Ghost “falling” on those that are saved. Turn with me to **Acts 2:1-4: And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**

Obviously the men that were in the upper room on the day of Pentecost were saved men. So the Holy Ghost already was living inside of them, but then we see this supernatural presence of the Holy Ghost that “filled” them and then they began speaking in other tongues. This filling was a separate event from the indwelling they received upon salvation. It was power given to these early believers to help further the Gospel. Remember that the Bible says in **1 Corinthians 1:22: For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:**

For the Jews to believe in those early days, the Lord gave them signs through sign gifts of the Holy Ghost which included; speaking in tongues, healing, prophesying, and raising people from the dead. The Apostles and others were given the power to do all of those things. And these were needed in those days of the early New Testament Church. They were only intended to be used to bring unbelievers to Christ and not for the believers to engage in **1 Corinthians 14:22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not:**

Despite what the Pentecostals, Charismatics, Holy Rollers, and Church of God folks think, these sign gifts are no longer valid for the Church today. We now have God’s Holy inspired written Word to bring unbelievers to Christ and these sign gifts are no longer needed. In fact the Bible also says this in **1 Corinthians 13:8-10: 8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.**

But, the early believers were gifted with the sign gifts which was given to them by what is referred to as “filling, falling, and fell.” When you see these used in conjunction with the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit it is referring to being bestowed upon with supernatural gifts of speaking in tongues, healing, prophesying, and raising people from the dead, all of which we read about in the Book of Acts during the early stages of the New Testament Church.

17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

So, by the power of the Holy Ghost the Apostles are given the ability to lay their hands on the new believers and bestow upon them the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

And finally Simon can hide his true motives no longer. We see what his real intentions are and that is to bring glory to himself. He isn't interested in salvation, he is interested in power and everything it brought with it; fame, popularity, and without a doubt money. He goes as far as trying to purchase this power. He has very little value in Christ but he sees great value in power.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

While Peter's statement may appear to be very tame in our English language, you better believe when he said this to Simon he was really lighting into him with the fiercest of condemnation. When Peter uses the word “**perish**” here, it comes from a Greek word which means to be utterly destroyed, damnable destruction, and perdition. This is the equivalent of meaning that Simon and his money were going to hell.

Peter goes on to tell him that he has neither part nor lot in this matter. This means that Simon cannot have the gift of the Holy Spirit and he cannot receive the gift either. He tells him because his heart is not right in the sight of God. In other words, Simon is not a saved man. He never repented and trusted Christ as Savior.

Simon puts more trust in money than he does Jesus Christ. There are a lot of people like that. Churches are filled with people that think they can buy their way into heaven. My friend, you could give a million dollars in the offering plate but if you aren't saved you are going to hell along with all of the other unrepentant sinners.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

Here again is the universal call for accepting the Gospel, and that is repentance. Jesus himself said in **Luke 13:3 and 13:5**, “...except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.” He said in **Luke 5:32**: **I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

It is obvious that Simon the Sorcerer had never repented and he was never saved. Peter tells him to repent of his wickedness to be forgiven. It was a grave sin that Simon has committed. It shows his lack of love, concern, or respect for the things of God. He is all about himself.

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity

Peter's perception is guided by the Holy Ghost. We need more Christians today with some Holy Ghost perception. The problem is that so many Christians are living in sin and out of God's will that they wouldn't perceive a fake Christian if he was standing in front of him.

Peter said that Simon was in the “**gall of bitterness.**” That word gall is the same as our word bile. Bile is the bitter yellowish-green fluid that is secreted by the liver and stored in the gallbladder. If you have ever had a stomach virus and have vomited over and over, once your stomach is empty of all of the food you have eaten then you start vomiting bile and brother that is some bad stuff.

He also told Simon that he was “in the bond of iniquity.” In other words, Simon is still in bondage of sin. His sins have never been forgiven him.

24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

I want you to pay very close attention to this verse. At first glance, the casual observer may think that Simon was repentant and wanted to be saved from his sins but that is not at all what this verse implies.

First, notice that Simon tells Peter to pray for him but Peter had told Simon that he needed to pray for himself. My friend, if you are a lost sinner, you are the one that has to pray to the Lord for forgiveness of your sins. No one else can pray that for you. Simon is too proud to pray for himself so he tells Peter to do it for him.

Secondly, notice that Simon doesn't want prayer for his sins, he wants prayer to prevent the bad things from happening to him. He's not repentant, he is scared for what might happen to him. People need to realize that when you get saved you are getting saved from your sins. It is the sin that is being addressed, not your fear. There is great fear in knowing you are going to die and go to hell but the cause of that is your sin.

Simon has no intentions of leaving his sin or getting forgiveness of his sin. He refuses to repent, refuses to pray. There is no biblical evidence that he ever repented and therefore as far as we know Simon the Sorcerer is in hell today.

25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

And so, the revival ended in Samaria with the preachers going around preaching all over Samaria before returning to the home Church in Jerusalem.

In our next study we will examine Philip's guidance of the Holy Spirit to travel to other places to preach and the account of the Ethiopian Eunuch.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version