

A CASE OF CONVERSION, APOSTASY AND RESTORATION (Acts 8:9-24)

I. The ruse of Simon (vs. 9-11).

- A. Simon was a man of that area that used magic or sorcery to capture the minds of the people of Samaria.
 - 1. The word “sorcery” is the same word translated “wise men” in Matthew 2.
 - 2. This type of magic came from Zoroastrianism, which developed in what we know of as Iran.
 - 3. It was used to do exactly what the word “bewitched” means, capture minds, trick peoples minds into believing something by amazing them.
- B. By sleight of hand and trickery, Simon had gotten the people to believe that he had the power of God.
- C. By doing this, he held great power over the people.
 - 1. It wasn't just poor, common people either.
 - 2. His power was over the least to the greatest.
 - 3. This was the Chris Angel or Harry Houdini of his day.

II. The redemption of Simon (vs. 12-13).

- A. The word “but” is very important in this passage.
 - 1. Simon had held power over the people.
 - 2. They believed he as the power of God.
- B. But, when they heard the truth, their minds were changed.
 - 1. Philip preached Christ to them.
 - 2. This included preaching about His church and about who and what Jesus was.
- C. Along with that preaching, Philip had been performing miracles to confirm the things he was preaching were true (vs. 6-7).
- D. Because of what they heard and what they saw they were convinced of the truth of the gospel and many obeyed the teaching of Philip and were baptized.
- E. What is amazing is that the one who had held power over the people by fraud also believed and was baptized.
 - 1. This man, one who had position and prominence in the eyes of the people before Philip came, gave up all of that to obey the gospel.
 - 2. There is a lot of good to learn from this man.
 - 3. He was willing to leave behind that which he had used to promote himself in order to obey the gospel.
 - 4. We need more people like Simon in this world.
 - 5. In Acts 13, we read of another sorcerer who had some power, Elymas, who withstood the truth that Paul preached and had to be struck blind.
 - 6. He was unwilling to change for the truth, whereas Simon was completely willing.
- F. When Simon heard Philip's preaching, he believed it obeyed it by being

baptized.

- G. Luke then tells us something that I find interesting.
 - 1. He continued to go with Philip wherever he went and was in amazement at the miracles Philip performed.
 - 2. Why do you think he was amazed?
 - 3. The reason, at least to me, is that he was seeing something that was real.
 - 4. All the things he had done were faked so as to draw people to him.
 - 5. What Philip was doing was real and lasting.
- H. Whatever way we look at it, Simon was saved at this point by believing the preaching of Philip and then being baptized into Christ.

III. The resolve of Simon (vs. 14-19).

- A. Word got back to the apostles in Jerusalem about what great success Philip was having in Samaria so Peter and John came.
- B. When these two apostles came, they prayed that God would allow the Holy Spirit to be given to these new converts.
- C. The apostles then laid their hands on some of the converts and passed miraculous gifts on to them so they could confirm the words they would preach to others.
- D. This amazed Simon even more than Philip's abilities.
- E. At this point, Simon resolved to get this ability for himself.
 - 1. Performing miracles was wonderful.
 - 2. To Simon, the ability to give others the ability to perform miracles was too much for him to pass up.
- F. Sadly, he went through with his resolution and asked the apostles to give him that ability and he would pay them for it.
- G. In times past, Simon had made his living with magic.
 - 1. He would perform magic and get paid.
 - 2. He would see a new trick and offer money to the one who performed it to teach him how to do it.
 - 3. It is probable that he saw the ability to impart gifts to others as a money making scheme.

IV. The restoration of Simon (vs. 20-24).

- A. Peter immediately nipped this idea in the bud.
- B. The literal translation of the beginning of Peter's statement is "you and your money will go to hell."
 - 1. Peter meant this literally.
 - 2. At that point, Simon was lost and would end up in hell for his sin.
- C. It is interesting that many in the religious world, those infected with the false doctrine of Calvinism, teach that based on this, Simon was never saved.
 - 1. John Calvin taught this back in the 1600's and now it is still in books and sermons today.
 - 2. Despite the fact that Simon did everything else the other Samaritans did and the exact same language is used to describe their conversions, they were saved but Simon was not, at least

according to Calvinism.

- D. For Simon to have not been saved would be to have him expressing an insincere faith at his conversion.
 - 1. Luke says the exact opposite.
 - 2. Luke says that "Simon himself believed also."
 - 3. He believed in the exact same manner as the others.
 - 4. He obeyed in the exact same manner as the others.
- E. The truth is, Simon obeyed and was saved but then sinned and became lost.
- F. Peter told Simon that he had no part of distributing the gifts of the Holy Spirit and, even if it were possible, which it wasn't, he wouldn't be able to do so because his heart was not right with God.
- G. It is at this point, we get to see another great spiritual lesson: a child of God who sins can repent and pray for forgiveness and have that sin removed.
 - 1. Some call this God's second law of pardon.
 - 2. A baptized believer who sins does not have to be baptized again.
 - 3. He or she has to repent and pray.
- H. The reason Simon needed to do so was that he was in the bile of bitterness, he would be eaten up with it if he continued in that mindset.
- I. Also, he was captive to the sin as long as he thought that way.
- J. Simon then asked Peter to pray for him.
 - 1. I believe this shows Simon's penitence and desire to be right with God.
 - 2. We extend the Lord's invitation and ask people to respond allowing their brethren to pray for them.