

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mrs. Calvert, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Kelly Hall, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Justin Law, Mr. Mark Law, Lamar Mathis, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mrs. Sowder, Ms. Ward, Mr. Winns.

Out of Town: The Dowlings.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website: www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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Simon the Sorcerer

By Derek Long

Acts 8 tells us of how the gospel spreads from Jerusalem into the regions of Judea and Samaria as a result of the persecution following the death of Stephen (Acts 8:1-4). Acts 8 focuses mainly upon the preaching of Philip in the city of Samaria (Acts 8:5-25) and to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40). Simon the Sorcerer is introduced to us as we read about Philip preaching the gospel in the city of Samaria.

Philip comes to Samaria and is able to work miracles to confirm the message he was preaching (Acts 8:5-8). The people of Samaria had previously been impressed with the tricks performed by Simon but when they saw genuine miracles performed by Philip they believed Philip instead of continuing to follow Simon (Acts 8:9-12). Simon comes from a background many of us might think makes him not likely to be receptive to the truth. The Bible condemns the practice of sorcery (Galatians 5:19-21) and here is an individual who has become famous because of his sorcery. Yet we see in Simon an example of the power of the gospel. Simon shows us the gospel has the power to convict and save a person who was living a life of sin (Romans 1:16).

Acts 8:13 tells us of the conversion of Simon. It says, “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” (NKJV). Simon recognized Philip’s miracles as being the real thing. Simon’s conversion is one way we can prove Philip’s miracles were not simply tricks which any magician or sorcerer would have known. Simon’s belief is compared to the belief of the others in the city of Samaria. There are those who want to question whether Simon really was saved in Acts 8:13. However, if Simon’s belief was not genuine, how do we know the belief of the others in Samaria was genuine? If Simon was not saved after doing what Jesus said a person must do to be saved (Mark 16:16), then how can we know whether anyone is ever saved? The only reason a person would question Simon’s conversion is because what happens in the next verses does not coincide with the preconceived ideas of some who teach a saved person cannot so sin as to be lost.

Simon shows us it takes belief and baptism to become a saved individual. Many people today want to talk about being saved at the moment of faith or belief but Simon was not saved in this manner. As one studies the conversions in the book of Acts, it becomes evident a person was not saved prior to being baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; etc.).

Simon shows us it is possible for a saved person to fall back into sin. Acts 8:14-17 describes how the apostles Peter and John came to Samaria to lay their hands on these new believers so they might receive the Holy Spirit. While these events are taking place the text tells us, “And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit

was given, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 8:18-19, NKJV). Simon desires to buy the ability he sees the apostles possessed. It is good to remember Simon recognizes it was through the laying on of the apostles’ hands that one received the ability to perform miraculous spiritual gifts. Since we have no living apostles on the earth today, it is impossible for anyone to receive the Holy Spirit in a manner which allows them to perform miracles today. Peter rebukes Simon for making such a request (Acts 8:20-23). Peter does not tell Simon to “repent and be baptized” as he told those non-Christians to do on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37-38). Rather, Peter here gives different instructions as to how Simon will have his sin forgiven since he already is a Christian. Simon will need to repent and pray. Today, when a person who is a Christian goes back into sin God does not require the person to be baptized again but does require them to repent, confess their sin, and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

Simon appears to have a good attitude after receiving Peter’s rebuke. He asks Peter to pray to the Lord for him (Acts 8:24). When people point out sin in our life, we should not become upset at them. We should instead be grateful to them and seek to make the necessary corrections in our life. Let us learn from the good and bad points in Simon’s life how to be better servants of God!