

Daily Bible Readings

Our Read-Ahead for: 23 October 2022

Simon Wants to Buy Power

Monday: Who Can Understand God's Power? (**Job 26**)

Tuesday: Using the Name of the Lord (**Acts 19:11–20**)

Wednesday: Christ, the Power of God (**1 Corinthians 1:18–25**)

Thursday: Faith Resting on God's Power (**1 Corinthians 1:26–2:5**)

Friday: The Works of the Flesh (**Galatians 5:16–21**)

Saturday: The Fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22–26**)

Sunday: What Money Cannot Buy (**Acts 8:9–24**)

Simon Wants to Buy Power

Bible Background: Acts 8:4–24

Printed Text: Acts 8:9–24

Devotional Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18–25

Keep in Mind: “*And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,*” (Acts 8:18, KJV)

Aim for Change

*By the end of the lesson, we will: **DISCUSS** Simon’s motivation to receive the Holy Spirit; **REFLECT** on any selfish desires for God’s power; and **CREATE** a list of true and sincere motives for following Christ.*

In Focus

Do churches ever favor the wealthy people in the congregation? Can money buy a person’s way into church power? In today’s lesson, we will see how consequences come from thinking money can buy everything, especially the Holy Spirit.

Focal Verses

Acts 8:9-24

9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which before time in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:

10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, this man is the great power of God.

11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

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 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 perishes 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.

The Lesson

I. The People, Places and Times

Background: In Acts, selected events in church history are recorded that demonstrate Christian doctrine and practice. Clearly, it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that the men and women of God can testify that Jesus is the Christ. There is great emphasis on the connection between the Old Testament, the Jews, and Christianity. There is an even greater emphasis that salvation is not bound by a believer's race or ethnicity; rather, it is extended to all humankind. In Acts, it is only Jesus, the Christ, who can fulfill the needs of the Gentiles and the Jews.

Sorcery: In Unger’s Bible Dictionary, sorcery is defined as “the practice of the occult arts under the power of evil spirits or demons and has been common in all ages of the world’s history” (1039). In today’s Scripture, we will read about Simon the sorcerer, who called upon occult arts to do such wonders people held him in great awe. Simon took upon himself the title of “*the great one.*”

We are more familiar with a type of magic which is simply sleight of hand, using tricks as hiding cards up the sleeve or drawing attention away from the hand doing the trick. There is another magic that is drawn from the power of evil spirits. For example, the practitioner may do things which are not within the realm of the everyday laws of physics.

In cultures in Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Europe, sorcerers scare people. People fear if they do not sacrifice animals and other items, the sorcerer may invoke evil spirits to hurt them. All along, the sorcerer is getting rich from the sacrifices. Throughout the Bible, magical arts are condemned because of their connection with evil spirits and because they lead people to do terrible things out of fear, including sacrificing their own children.

II. In Depth

1. Introducing Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:9–11)
2. Many turn to Christ (Acts 8:12–13)
3. The Believers Receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8: 14–17)
4. Simon Attempts to Buy the Power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8: 18–24)

III. Take Aways

IV. Closing Prayer