

Simon and Simon, or, Two Kingdoms

1. Observation and exposition of Acts 8:9-25
2. The take-away for us?

Observation and exposition of Acts 8:9-25

1. Pericope - what is it?
 - a. Thought unit
2. Read **Acts 8:9-25**
3. The characters
 - a. Simon the magician
 - b. Satan
 - c. People of Samaria
 - d. Philip
 - e. The Holy Spirit
 - f. The apostles - Peter and John
4. Simon the magician
 - a. He was a magician.
 - i. What kind of magician?
 - ii. What kind of magic?
 - iii. Who or what was the power behind his magic?
 - b. There was a spiritual or religious angle to his magic - see verse **10**
 - i. Deception?
 - c. What motivated him?
 - i. Pride? Power?
 - ii. Before Philip came to town, Simon had been the center of attention. Now he was amazed at a greater power than him (or than he had access to).
 1. He was now in second place...
 - d. His belief (**13**)
 - i. He believed, and was even baptized.
 - ii. What did Peter think and say? (**20-23**)
 1. What was Simon's response to what Peter said? (**24**)
 - a. Not repentance - he wanted to avoid the outcome that Peter warned him of.
 - iii. Was it genuine, real, or salvific?
 1. **John 2:23-25; 6:60-67**
 2. **Matthew 7:21-23**

3. **Luke 8:4-15** (or **Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20**)
 4. **Acts 19:18-20**
 5. “The nature of his belief must remain uncertain. No doubt it was sincere as far as it went, but it was superficial and inadequate.” Bruce, 167
 6. Other commentators are far more blunt and say “No way was he saved.”
- iv. Church history or tradition
 1. “Simon Magus plays an extraordinary role in early Christian literature.” Bruce, 166
 - a. For example, Irenaeus claims that Simon was the source of Gnosticism.
5. Satan
 - a. Has he been sitting idly by during these past seven chapters in Acts?
 - b. Where has his work been evident so far?
 - i. Persecution
 - ii. Ananias and Sapphira
6. People of Samaria
 - a. Before Philip came to town, they had been amazed by Simon the magician.
 - b. They believed the gospel that Philip preached, and were baptized.
7. Philip
 - a. We know from **6:3-5** that he was full of the Holy Spirit
 - b. Continued to preach the good news about **(12)**
 - i. The kingdom of God
 - ii. The name of Jesus Christ
 - c. Baptized the new believers **(12)**
 - d. Was performing signs and great miracles (or works of power) **(13)**
 - e. What motivated Philip, as compared to Simon?
8. The apostles - Peter and John
 - a. Why did they come to Samaria?
 - i. Was Philip’s message incomplete?
 - ii. Perhaps to validate or endorse what had happened here. See **1:8** - Samaria was a major next step in the spread of the gospel.

- iii. Apparently they were intended to be a key part in the Samaritans who had believed receiving the Holy Spirit. **(14-15)**

9. Holy Spirit

- a. Why hadn't the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit yet?
 - i. **2:38-39** seems to indicate that they should have already.
 - ii. But the apostles and/or the first disciples had believed but not received the Holy Spirit before Pentecost.
- b. What happened when they did receive the Holy Spirit?
 - i. We're not told at this point, but something happened, and Simon saw it happen.
 - 1. It seems like he was an outsider at this point, seeing it happen to others. Perhaps he did not receive the Holy Spirit?
 - ii. Compare **2:1-4**; **10:44-48**; **19:1-7**
 - iii. Is this normative for all believers? Do all believers receive the Holy Spirit?
 - iv. What happens when we receive the Holy Spirit? How do we know that we have received the Holy Spirit?
- c. What is "the gift of God" that Peter refers to in verse **20**, and Simon wanted to purchase with money?
 - i. Spiritual gifts?
 - ii. The Holy Spirit?
 - 1. See **2:38**

10. Why Simon? What does he represent? Why did Luke include him in Acts?

- a. Two kingdoms - at war
- b. Syncretism
 - i. What is it? A blending or mixing together of belief systems.
 - ii. Christianity will not tolerate syncretism.
 - 1. God (Yahweh) is a jealous god
- c. Are we at risk today?

The take-away for us

Resources

1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, F. F. Bruce
2. *The Book of the Acts*, F. F. Bruce
3. *The Acts of the Apostles*, David G. Peterson
4. *The Message of Acts*, John Stott
5. *The Acts of the Apostles*, Ben Witherington III