

FALL QUARTER SUNDAY SCHOOL 2015

THEME: ACTS – EXPOSING GOD’S CHURCH COMMUNITY IN ACTION!

UNIT ONE – “The Gains of their Actions”

UNIT TWO – “The Pains of their Actions”

UNIT THREE – “The Fame of their Actions”

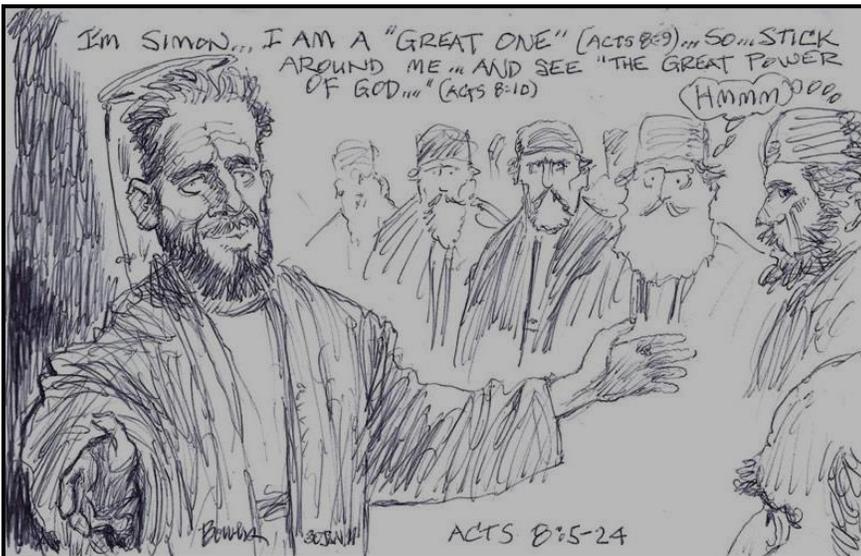
“DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN AUTHENTIC OR COUNTERFEIT FAITH...THE STORY OF SIMON THE SORCERER”

Sunday School Lesson No. V

October 4, 2015

Rev. Frank A. Davis, III

Pastor-Teacher



Lesson Text: Acts 8:9-24

Required Reading: Acts 8:1-25

Memory Text: Acts 8:18, 20-21, “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money...But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.”

Reliable Resources: Union Gospel Press Expositor and Illuminator; Libronix Electronic Library; Precepts for Living (UMI), Word Search 9 and 10 Electronic Library; MacArthur Study Bible; Thirty Amazing People in the Bible by Dr. David Jeremiah, The Book of Acts by E. Gillentine; The Book of Acts in 24 Lessons by E. L. Bynum; George Brooks Preaching Commentary

INTRODUCTION

It is a piercing truth that everyone who speaks the name Jesus is not truly saved. There have been in the past, are in the present and will be even in the future, those who are authentic and others who are counterfeit. Distinguishing between the two is not an easy thing. Sometimes the very elect are almost deceived. Jesus had His Judas and today we examine Simon of Samaria.

Was he a genuine, authentic believer or a deceived counterfeit? Let us examine his life as we attempt to **“Distinguish between Authentic or Counterfeit Faith!”**

Our Anticipated Power Points... Simon is described as:

- **A Certain Man. Acts 8:9-11**
- **A Curious Man. Acts 8:12-13**
- **A Congregational Man. Acts 8:14-17**
- **A Calculating Man. Acts 8:18-19**
- **A Counterfeit Man. Acts 8:20-24**

SETTING:

Chapter 8 opens with the death of Stephen and the havoc of Saul (Paul). When the first martyr of the Church falls in death, it opened the door for Saul of Tarsus to go out and wreck havoc on the new Church in Jerusalem, causing them to do what Jesus commanded them to do in Acts 1:8. Heretofore, they remained a tight group experiencing fellowship and enjoying each others' company as they moved among the traditional religious Jews of the city. They had been warned by the Jewish leaders not to preach in Jesus' name, but they were not ashamed and counted it a joy to suffer in His name (4:13-37). Now after Stephen's death, the Church was scattered and **“they went everywhere preaching the word.”**

Our lesson picks up with Philip, one of the original seven chosen to serve in Chapter 6 with Stephen, going into the region of Samaria, preaching and proclaiming Jesus with great power!

You must remember the prejudice and division that was between the Jews and Samaritans, but Jesus loved them and even sought to share and save them. (Read John 4:1-42). The Great Commission of Acts 1:8 specifically calls for the Gospel to be proclaimed in Jerusalem, all Judea and Samaria before traveling to the ends of the earth. When Philip preached and demonstrated outstanding evidence of the Holy Spirit's power and presence, great joy came to the city (8:4-8). It is here we pick up with our lesson meeting a man named Simon, and seeking to distinguish between authentic or counterfeit faith.

LESSON OUTLINE

I. Simon...A Certain Man. Acts 8:9-11

A certain man of distinction among the Samaritans who had been a master of the curious acts of Satan, practicing, according to MacArthur: "The Medo-Persians mixture of science and superstition, including astrology, divination, and the occult (Deut. 18:9-12, Rev. 9:21)... Simon claimed to be united to God." According to one commentator: "The presence of such a charlatan among spiritually needy people is not surprising. There were many such persons who took advantage of the spiritual emptiness in the ancient world, and the gospel confronted these as it spread (Acts 13:6-11 (Elymas); 16:16-18 (A certain damsel); 19:13-16 (7 sons of Sceva))."

II. Simon...A Curious Man. Acts 8:12-13

Simon's curiosity caused him to hear the message and muse the miracles of Philip. He then joined the congregation and apparently had a form of belief and was even baptized. But what was his motive? Only God truly knew for sure, but the Word declares his great curiosity with the spiritual gifts of Philip. Do you think he was a convert as described in Romans 10:8-10? Authentic or counterfeit? (It appears Simon was committed to the deeds of Phillip and not the Jesus who Phillip preached.)

III. Simon...A Congregational Man. Acts 8:14-17

Simon was present among the congregation of the believers when Peter and John came to confirm the authenticity of the congregation of Samaria. The Jewish congregation of Jerusalem had not ventured to reach the half-breed Samaritans, but Jesus' commission was for their salvation as well. (Read Acts 1:8)

When Peter and John came as witnesses for the Church at Jerusalem, they saw a great crusade that was taking place, and they prayed for the Samaritan congregation, to which God authenticated their acceptance into the Body of Christ as He did with the Jews at Pentecost. (Read Acts 2:1-4). It is evident that Jesus has only **ONE** Church and those who enter in come from many backgrounds, but are bonded by His blood and His Spirit! This will be further authenticated in Chapters 10 and 11 when the Gentiles will be received (10:44-48; 11:19-17).

IV. Simon...A Calculating Man. Acts 8:18-19

When Simon witnesses the gift of God to impart the Holy Spirit, he tipped his hand. Being a congregational man does not mean he was a consecrated man! He appeared to be a covetous man, counterfeit, and not authentic. (Matt. 26:14-16, Mk. 14:10-11; I Timothy 6:10). I believe Simon was in the building, but possibly not in the Body!

We also see how he calculated the value of God's gift in dollars and cents! Simon's sin was threefold, according to E. L. Bynum: "(1.) He wanted to use the power of God for profit. (2.) He thought the power of God could be bought. (3.) He had no respect for the Holy things of God." Surely, Simon really miscalculated!

V. Simon...A Counterfeit Man. Acts 8:20-24

E. L. Bynum sums up Simon as a counterfeit to the faith because of Peter's rebuke: "(A) *"Thy money perish with thee."* (B) *"Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter."* (C) *"Thy heart is not right."* v. 21 (D) *"Thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."* v. 23 (E) *"He did not repent or pray for himself."* v. 24. According to George Brooks, "The picture Peter was painting in verse 21 was that Simon did not have any real estate in the Kingdom of God." Our modern day easy believism without repentance keeps a door open, but the Church Fathers belief in a salvation that is founded on true repentance closes the door on Simon. vv. 21-23. By all the evidence presented, Simon was not a man of authentic faith, but he tends to distinguish himself as a counterfeit.

CLOSING

Matthew 7:17-20, *"Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."*

Distinguishing Between Authentic or Counterfeit Faith.

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TV Telecast: WHNO TV-Channel 20, Sunday, 6:30 a.m.

Looking Ahead:

October 11, 2015

Acts 9:19b-31

The Sunday School Lesson is taught each Wednesday at noon at Bibleway. All are welcome!

