

Peter's Censure of Simon

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Introduction:

A. Acts 8:14-25

B. Controversy

1. He was not Simon Magus, the founder of a dark magic cult
2. He did not fake his conversion as so many have speculated
3. He is not the father of the sin of simony, paying for position and influence in the church, named for him

C. What can we learn from Peter's rebuke of this man?

I. SIMON WAS CONVERTED

A. Acts 8:13

1. He too believed and was baptized
2. He continued with Philip, amazed at the miracles

B. Was Simon truly converted?

1. Many deny that he was, because of what happened afterward. Some teach that Simon was never a true believer.
2. No one suggests that Peter was not a true believer of Jesus when he denied the Lord three times.
3. Sins are committed after we become disciples of Christ and those sins sever us from God.
4. But Luke was inspired to say Simon "also believed"
5. His faith was just as real as the rest of the Samaritans - 1John 2:19
6. It's easy for new believers to make mistakes when their overall knowledge of Scripture is weak.

II. SIMON WAS TEMPTED BY POWER

A. Acts 8:14-19

1. The apostles sent Peter and John upon hearing of the conversion of the Samaritans
2. Peter and John imparted the Holy Spirit to the Samaritans
3. This power to impart the Spirit became a stumbling block for Simon. He sought to buy the ability to impart the Spirit
4. A popular American folksong, All My Trials, cautions, "If religion were a thing that money could buy, the rich would live and the poor would die."
5. God's power isn't for sale. We can't "cut a deal" with God. This didn't stop Kenneth Hagin from authoring a booklet, "How To Write Your Own Ticket With God"
6. Simon allowed himself to be called the "Great Power" (vs 10). Whenever a ministry is focused on a self-exalting personality instead of Christ, there's a serious problem.

III. SIMON FALLS TO TEMPTATION

A. Acts 8:20-23

1. Salvation can be lost. Simon fell back into sin.
2. Our salvation can be forfeited by our own actions.
3. Simon reveals how quickly Christians can be overtaken in sin

B. Peter calls on Simon to repent

1. The purpose of his confrontation is reconciliation.

IV. SIMON IS RESTORED BY REPENTANCE

A. Acts 8:22-25

1. When a Christian sins, he need not be baptized again, but to repent and pray, confessing his sins - 1John 1:9
2. After baptism, repentance is necessary for forgiveness.
3. Peter tells Simon that he needs to change his heart before God.

B. Simon is told to pray to God for forgiveness.

1. Simon is not told to pray to Peter, pray to Mary, or pray to any other person to receive forgiveness. God is the one who forgives sins.

C. Simon then asks Peter to pray for him. Was this sorcerer implying that God would be more apt to listen to Peter than to him?

1. General Patton's request to his Chaplain: "With your prayer and my relationship to God, we'll have good weather for battle." One Commander hearing that said, "Chaplain, we're in trouble."
2. Peter certainly could pray for Simon, but he couldn't repent for him--only Simon could do that.
3. Others can pray for our spiritual condition - James 5:16
4. Peter could not forgive Simon's sin. But Peter could pray to God that He hear Simon's plea for forgiveness.

V. SIMON REACTED WELL TO HIS SINS

A. Why would a Christian need to repent? Sin.

B. How do some react to their sin?

1. Deny it
2. Try to cover it up
3. Attempt justify or rationalize it
4. Take responsibility

C. Christians change and grow from such crises

1. Psalm 51