

Acts 8:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

Analysis

Peter's severe pronouncement - 'thy money perish with thee' - is a curse upon Simon's presumption. The Greek is strong: 'may you and your money go to destruction.' Peter rebukes the fundamental error of thinking God's gift can be purchased with money. Reformed theology emphasizes grace as absolutely free and unmerited - any attempt to buy, earn, or merit salvation or spiritual gifts perverts the gospel. Peter's rebuke establishes that the Spirit is God's sovereign gift, not man's commodity. The severity warns against mercenary religion.

Historical Context

This confrontation occurred in Samaria circa AD 33-35. Peter's harsh words echo Jesus' pronouncements against those who commodify religion (Matthew 21:12-13). The early church maintained this principle against selling spiritual benefits.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Why is attempting to purchase God's gifts such a serious offense?
2. How does the free grace of God confront all forms of religious commerce?
3. In what ways do modern religious practices commodify spiritual gifts?

Interlinear Text

Πέτρος	δὲ	εἶπεν	πρὸς	αὐτόν	Τὸ	ἀργύριόν	σου	σὺν
Peter	But	said	unto	him	G3588	money	Thy	with
G4074	G1161	G2036	G4314	G846		G694	G4675	G4862
σοὶ	εἴη	εἰς	ἀπώλειαν	ὅτι	τὴν	δωρεὰν	τοῦ	θεοῦ
thee	perish	G1519	G684	because	G3588	that the gift	G3588	of God
G4671	G1498			G3754		G1431		G2316
ἐνόμισας	διὰ	χρημάτων		κτᾶσθαι				
thou hast thought	with	money		may be purchased				
G3543	G1223	G5536		G2932				

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:8 (Parallel theme): Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Daniel 5:17 (Parallel theme): Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

Acts 2:38 (References Peter): Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Revelation 18:15 (Parallel theme): The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

Acts 8:22 (References God): Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

James 5:3 (Parallel theme): Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

Isaiah 55:1 (Parallel theme): Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Acts 10:45 (References Peter): And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 11:17 (References God): Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

Zechariah 5:4 (Parallel theme): I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.