

Acts 8:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Simon the sorcerer had 'bewitched' (Greek *existemi* - amazed/astonished) Samaria with magic arts, claiming greatness. His influence preceded Philip's arrival. The mention of his sorcery establishes a contrast between demonic power and the Holy Spirit's power. Reformed theology recognizes Satan's counterfeit miracles that deceive, requiring discernment to distinguish God's genuine work from demonic deception. Simon's later attempt to buy the Spirit's power (v.18-19) would reveal his unregenerate heart despite outward profession.

Historical Context

Magic and sorcery were common in the ancient world. Samaritans were particularly known for occult practices. Simon's influence suggests he was a prominent figure, possibly claiming to be the Samaritan Taheb (prophet like Moses) or a divine emanation.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do we distinguish genuine Holy Spirit power from counterfeit spiritual manifestations?
2. What attracts people to occult power rather than submitting to God's authority?
3. Why does Satan use counterfeit miracles to deceive and oppose God's truth?

Interlinear Text

Ἄνθρωπος	δέ	τινα	ὀνόματι	Σίμων	προὔπῃρχεν	ἐν	τῇ
man	But	some	called	Simon	which beforetime	in	G3588
G435	G1161	G5100	G3686	G4613	G4391	G1722	
πόλει	μαγεύων	καὶ	ἐξιστῶν	τὸ	ἔθνος	τῆς	
the same city	used sorcery	and	bewitched	G3588	the people	G3588	
G4172	G3096	G2532	G1839		G1484		
Σαμαρείας	λέγων	εἶναί	τινα	ἐαυτὸν	μέγαν		
of Samaria	giving out	was	some	that himself	great one		
G4540	G3004	G1511	G5100	G1438	G3173		

Additional Cross-References

Acts 13:6 (Parallel theme): And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus:

Acts 5:36 (Parallel theme): For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

John 7:18 (Parallel theme): He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

Leviticus 20:6 (Parallel theme): And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.

Acts 8:11 (Parallel theme): And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

Exodus 7:11 (Parallel theme): Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

Exodus 7:22 (Parallel theme): And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said.