

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

Ἄνθρος δέ τινα ὄνόματι Σίμων προϋπῆρχεν 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.

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