

A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- Every generation of people has had to contend with charlatans, con-artists, flimflam men, hucksters.
- A century ago they came in the form of rain-makers and snake oil salesmen.

- Today, men often push
“religion”
as a means of
making merchandise
of the brethren and
“by covetousness
they will exploit you
with deceptive words”
(2 Peter 2:3).

- **God told the ancient Israelites:**
- **“There shall not be found among you anyone ...**
- **who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.**
- **For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD”**
(Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

Acts 8:9

**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:**

- . Luke's purpose in telling us about Simon is to give us a warning.
- It's a warning for people who want to see supernatural signs, wonders.
- It is a warning that faith may be a wanting faith.

➤ Many people are like those
in the days of Jeremiah.

➤ Jeremiah 2:13

**They hewed them out cisterns,
broken cisterns,
that can hold no water.**

➤ Simon's faith was
a broken faith.

➤ Like a broken cistern,
it was useless.

- One of the greatest stories of conversion in the book of Acts deals with a con-artist called Simon the sorcerer (**Acts 8:5–13**).

- Simon would have made **a good televangelist.**
 - He could have had **his own TV show**
 - Felt right on home with **several notable preachers of our day.**
- Simon had **everything** going for him.
 - His credentials as a **“faith healer”** would have been impressive.

- To illustrate what went wrong with Simon is an experience every mother of toddlers has had.
- A one-year-old child is sitting on your lap and suddenly in the window there is a beautiful bird
- Holding out your hand you point at the bird and say,
 - "Look, look at the bird."

- **What** does the child look at?
 - He looks at your **hand** and the sign you are making with your fingers.
 - He might even try **to imitate the sign** by putting out his index finger.

- He sees the sign.
- He is excited because you are excited.
 - He joins in imitating the sign as best he can.
- But the problem is
he never sees the bird.

- That is what happened to Simon the magician in Acts 8.
 - He saw the signs that Philip was doing.
 - They were better than his own magical signs.
- He got excited about them.
 - He followed Philip around and wanted to imitate them.
 - But he never saw the bird in the window.

- He never saw..
- The ugliness of his own sin,
- The need for repentance,
- And the glory of Christ
in the gospel
who forgives
and makes
new and clean.

- Simon was by no means an unusual type in the ancient world.
- There were many astrologers and soothsayers and magicians,
 - and in an unenlightened age they had a great influence and made a comfortable living.

- Sadly, There is little to be surprised at in that even in **the twenty-first century** the world has not risen above fortune-telling and astrology, as almost any popular newspaper or magazine can witness.

- It is not to be thought that Simon and his fellow-practitioners were all conscious frauds.

- Many of them had deluded themselves before they deluded others and believed in their own powers.

- Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

- Simon has left his name on the language for simony still means the unworthy buying and selling of ecclesiastical offices.

- We notice that verse 13 says,
"Even Simon himself
believed,
and after
being baptized,
he continued with Philip."

• But then something happens
that shows
his "belief"
to be false.

- The apostles come down
and lay hands on
the Samaritans so
that they receive
the Holy Spirit.

- Then beginning
in verse 18

here's what happened:

- When Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands,
- He offered them money, saying,
"Give me also this power that any one on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

- A few years later, the apostle Paul had a similar experience with a sorcerer.
- When explaining God's way of life to a proconsul named Sergius Paulus, "Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith" (**Acts 13:8**).

- Let us notice 6 things about Simon.

- **# 1 Simon Made Great Claims**

- Simon claimed

- **“that he was someone great”**

- **(Acts 8:9).**

- Look at the differences
between

- **Simon the Sorcerer**

- and

- **Philip:**

- One preached himself,
- The other preached Christ.
 - One man amazed his audience with “sorcery,”
 - While the other man performed genuine miracles by the Spirit of God.
(**Acts 8:13**)

- One man had to rely upon gullible people,
- The other man called for faith in the Son of God.
- This is the difference between the religion of Jesus Christ and the superstitions which the world calls religion.

- **Philip went into the region of Samaria**
to preach that the Messiah had come and to make known his teachings.
- **The same truths**
had before been preached in Samaria by our Savior Himself (**John 4:3–5**).
- Maybe why they **gladly received the word**
(**John 4:39–42**).

- The field had been prepared by Jesus Himself
 - He said the fields were “already white for harvest” (**John 4:35**).
 - It is in this field that Philip enters and preaches Christ Jesus.
 - Simon also preaches, but he was a fraud!

- # 2 Simon Drew
Large Numbers Of People

- The people of Samaria
“all gave heed”
to Simon
(**Acts 8:10**).
- His may have been
the first
“mega-church.”

- Large numbers are not wrong by themselves.
- Just because a preacher has a large following does not mean the message is pleasing to God (**Matthew 18:20**).
- Simon the sorcerer had a large following, but he was a thief!

- **# 3 Simon Had Many Influential Followers**
 - Simon's followers came from all classes of people, **“from the least to the greatest”** (**Acts 8:10**).
 - Some people get real excited when **a famous politician or Hollywood star** is a member of their church.
 - **God is not a respecter of persons** (**Acts 10:34–35**).

- Christ did not promise popularity (**Matthew 10:22**).
- The New Testament church was composed of former prostitutes, adulterers, homosexuals (**1 Cor. 6:9–11**).
- Jesus rejoiced when sinners came to Him (**Luke 15:1–7**).

- Not many “noble” people will come to Christ (1 Cor. 1:18–26).
 - Simon had “great” people follow him, but he was a charlatan!

- **# 4 Simon Could Offer Moving Testimonials**

- The Samaritans said,
“**This man is the great power of God**”
(**Acts 8:10**).

- If you dared to question the claims of Simon he would have supplied you **with a list of noble folks willing to give personal testimony** about his ability.

- Every witch doctor in Africa and every Voodoo priest in Haiti can supply you with a list of references.
 - What does it prove?
 - What about his audience?
 - Were they all liars?

- God allows Satan to blind the eyes of some (John 12:39–40; 2 Cor. 4:4).

- God will allow people to believe a lie (2 Thes. 2:9–12).

- **# 5 Simon Could Perform Astonishing Feats**
 - Simon was able to “**astonish**” his audience with his feats (**Acts 8:11**).
 - Like many “**faith healers**” today, he could probably cure everything from **headaches** to **vertigo** (**2 Thes. 2:9**).

- However, Simon could not make the **lame** to walk, the **blind** to see or raise the **dead** like the apostles did (**Acts 3:6; 9:40**).
- The **magicians** in Pharaoh's court imitated Moses (**Exodus 7:11**).

- **“Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds”**
(2 Cor. 12:12).
- **The Ephesians were commended because they**
“tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars”
(Rev. 2:2).
- Simon could perform astonishing feats,
but he was a huckster!

- **# 6** Simon Had Been A Long Time Resident Of Samaria
- For he had been able to dupe people “for a long time” (Acts 8:11).

- Some people believe longevity in a town is proof that God is with you.
- Some even brag that their church established the town.
- Simon was a long time resident of Samaria, but he was an impostor!

- Just because a church makes great claims,
 - Has a large number of influential members,
 - Offers moving testimonials,
 - Has existed in town for 50 years
- is no proof that God is with them.
 - Simon had all of this and more!
 - Don't allow yourself
to be influenced
by these things.

- Thankfully, Simon saw the genuine power of God and gave up on his religious scam (**Acts 8:12–13**).
- Would there were many more like him.

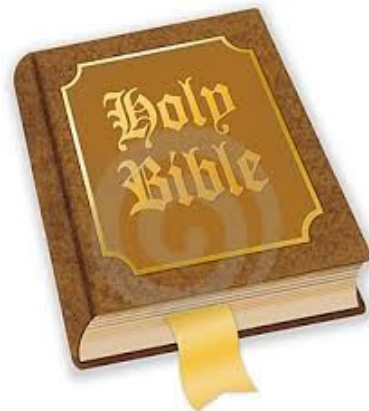
- **We are over 2,000 years**
removed from the
church established
in Jerusalem
in the second chapter
of Acts.
- But we can become
what they were
by doing what they did
(Acts 2:38–42).

- God is not going to **force anyone** to obey the truth. (**Romans 1:24-26**)
- Since God gave us **the power of choice**,
 - He has left that **choice with us**.
 - And by that choice we can believe a **lie**,
- Or we can believe the **truth**. (**2 Thessalonians 2:11–12**).

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say
“Come”.**

Revelation 22:17



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