

## A MIRACLE CAUSES A MAN TO ALMOST LOSE HIS SOUL!

Presented by

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As we read through the New Testament, we cannot help but be impressed with the many miracles that are recorded within its pages. Blind people received their sight. Lame people were able to walk. Deaf people were able to hear again. And dead people were even restored to life. When people in the first century witnessed such miracles, they were **very** impressed. In fact, on one occasion when Jesus healed a lame man, the Bible says in Mark 2:12 that the people were “amazed and glorified God, saying, ‘We never saw anything like this!’” In this instance, the miracle did exactly what it was designed to do. It caused people to glorify God.

But there is one event recorded in the New Testament where a man saw a miracle and it almost caused him to lose his soul. The story is found in Acts 8. Peter and John were two of the Lord’s apostles. While they were in the city of Samaria, they laid their hands on certain Christians in order to give them the gift of the Holy Spirit so that these Christians could perform miracles. The Bible tells us that there was one Christian by the name of Simon who saw this happen. Simon was impressed by the fact that these Christians could suddenly perform miracles. But Simon did not give the glory to God like the people in Mark 2 had done when Christ healed the lame man. Instead, Simon offered Peter and John some money and said, “Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” When Simon did this, he made a terrible mistake. Instead of glorifying God because of God’s power to do great things through miracles, Simon was selfish. He did not want to be able to do miracles in order to help bring people to Christ. He wanted to perform miracles just so he could impress people and show them how great he was.

This made Peter **very** angry. He turned to Simon and said, “Your money shall perish with you because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! Your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent of your wickedness and pray to God so that you might be forgiven for the evil thoughts of your heart” (Acts 8:20-22). It would have been fine if Simon had wanted to do miracles to help other people become Christians. But instead, Simon tried to buy the ability to do miracles for his own selfish reasons. When Peter scolded Simon, Simon realized that he had sinned. He then said to Peter, “Pray to the Lord for me so that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me” (Acts 8:24).

Simon did not understand the purpose behind miracles. Unfortunately, there are some people in the religious world today who do not understand the purpose of miracles either. They are like Simon. They want to be able to do miracles just to impress other people. Jesus and His disciples **never** performed miracles just to impress people. In fact, they did not even perform miracles just so they could heal someone or raise someone from the dead. Instead, they performed miracles to prove that the Gospel message they were preaching came from God.

What can we learn from the story of Simon in Acts 8? We can learn several things. First, the gift of the Holy Spirit could not be bought with money. It was something that God freely gave to certain Christians so that they could perform miracles to confirm God's Word as true. Second, the miracles that Christians performed were not designed to bring glory to those Christians. Instead, the miracles were designed to bring glory to God. Third, just like Simon, people today who want to do miracles for the wrong reason are sinning. And, just like Simon, if they do not repent of their sin, they will be lost and go to Hell.

The people of the first century did not have a Bible, which is why they needed miracles. Those miracles were the proof that what the Christians were saying was true. Today we have God's Word written down for us in the Bible, so we do not need someone to perform miracles for us. We need to remember the case of Simon and how he almost lost his soul because he did not understand the purpose behind miracles. Think how sad it will be if people in the religious world around us end up losing their souls because they, like Simon, fail to understand the purpose of miracles. They will be lost because they failed to study their Bibles and listen to God's Word. Then, no miracle of any kind will be able to save them.