
WHAT PETER DID NOT SAY

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Because of the *“great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem,”* the saints, with the exception of the apostles, were *“scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria”* (Acts 8:1). One of those *“scattered abroad”* was a man named Philip, who *“went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them”* (Acts 8:5). As a result of his preaching, many of the Samaritans believed and were baptized, including a sorcerer named Simon (cf. Acts 8:12,13).

During that period of time (while the apostles were yet alive) miraculous or *“spiritual gifts”* were frequently imparted to different ones through the laying on of the apostles’ hands (cf. Acts 6:6; 8:17,18; 19:1-6; 2 Tim. 1:6). In the absence of the completed revelation of God these *“gifts”* were needful so that the church might be properly edified (cf. 1 Cor. 14:12,26-31). Thus, upon learning of the conversion of the Samaritans, the apostles sent Peter and John to Samaria, and they prayed for the new converts and laid their hands on them, at which time they *“received the Holy Ghost”* (Acts 8:14-17). Simon, who before his conversion had bewitched the people with sorceries, could see that what was imparted through the *“laying on of the apostles’ hands”* was REAL; there was no trickery or fakery to what THEY were doing! He wanted this *“power,”* and even *“offered...money”* to buy *“this power.”* Some things have never been for sale, and this was one of them, so Peter wasted no time setting Simon straight.

To make a long story short, we simply say that Simon, a child of God, sinned when he tried to buy *“the gift of God...with money.”* His whole procedure reflected a heart that was *“not right in the sight of God”* (Acts 8:21). Peter, therefore, had an obligation to reprove Simon and urge that he make proper correction. What then did Peter say to Simon?

Peter did NOT say: *“Now Simon, it’s true that you’ve sinned, but don’t worry about it, for you are a child of God, saved by grace, and once you’re in grace you can never fall.”*

NOR did Peter say: *“Simon, since you are a child of God, and inasmuch as you sinned in ignorance, you need not worry over much – for you see, in your case, the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ is credited to your account, sufficing as it were for your imperfect obedience.”*

NOR did Peter say: *“Simon, since you have become a Christian and have already sinned, it’s time you learned the difference between the ‘gospel’ and the ‘doctrine’ – the gospel is what you obeyed in order to BECOME a Christian, and the doctrine is what you obey AFTER you become a Christian, so since you just violated the ‘doctrine,’ there is no need to get too uptight over that.”*

Well, what DID Peter say to Simon? He said: *“Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity”* (Acts 8:20-23).

When all is said and done it still behooves us to get back to the actual TEXT of the Bible. Calvinists will SAY that a child of God cannot fall from grace, and therefore does not HAVE to make any correction for the sins he commits as a Christian – that he will go to heaven anyway. Too soft brethren, especially those whose faith has been destroyed in infidel theological seminaries, and who have a passion for ecumenism, will SAY that the perfect obedience of Christ atones for a Christian’s ignorant disobedience. But the real question is, *“What does the BIBLE say?”*

In view of the fact that all of us are going to be judged by the divine standard of God’s word (cf. John 12:48), dare any of us set it aside for the puny sayings of man?