

A Man of INFLUENCE

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*"These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; **THOU THOUGHTEST THAT I WAS ALTOGETHER SUCH AN ONE AS THYSELF**: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes" (PSALM 50:21).*

There was a certain man in the city of Samaria, called Simon, who exercised his influence (sorcery) over the people and their affairs. He "bewitched the people of Samaria, **GIVING OUT THAT HIMSELF WAS SOME GREAT ONE**" (ACTS 8:9).

Today, too many religious leaders are doing the same thing. They lift themselves up instead of Jesus Christ, speaking "...great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (JUDE 1:16).

As for Simon, **ALL THE PEOPLE** gave him reverence, from the least to the greatest, saying, "**THIS MAN IS THE GREAT POWER OF GOD.**" They regarded Simon because he had bewitched (**ASTONISHED**) them for a long time (ACTS 8:11).

Then Philip, a believer, went down from Jerusalem to the city of Samaria and preached **CHRIST** unto them "and the people with **ONE ACCORD** gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did" (ACTS 8:6).

When Simon saw that there was great joy in the city because of the preaching of JESUS CHRIST, he too joined in with the people, being, as supposed, a man of God.

Just as the Pharisees and Sadducees came to John's baptism because the multitudes were "confessing their sins" (MATTHEW 3:5-8), Simon had to at least "appear" to be part of those who were joyful.

"Then Simon **himself believed** also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and **WONDERED, BEHOLDING** the **MIRACLES** and **SIGNS** which were done" (ACTS 8:13).

Not all who say "I believe" are born again. Jesus said, "If ye **continue in my word**, then are ye my disciples indeed" (JOHN 8:30, 31). Simon did not "continue."

When the apostles in "Jerusalem heard that Samaria had **received the word of God**, they sent unto them Peter and John" (Read all of ACTS 8:5-24).

Then Peter and John laid their hands on the people, and they received the Holy Ghost. Simon was watching and when he "...**SAW** that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them **money**, saying, 'Give me also this **POWER**, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost'" (ACTS 8:18, 19). Simon wanted more convincing INFLUENCE over the people.

In the 1950's, there was a preacher who called himself, **PROPHET JONES**, and he bewitched the people too, **GIVING OUT THAT HIMSELF WAS SOME GREAT ONE**. He led the people to believe that he could read their thoughts.



One woman, in the comfort of her home, spoke in jest about Prophet Jones, and immediately stopped, and looking up begged the prophet to forgive her comment, believing he had the power to hear her words.

He would hold his evening services until 4am, and all the congregation were fearful to leave because of his deceitful **INFLUENCE** on them. They fearfully believed that he was **THE GREAT POWER OF GOD**.



“HE MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION”

But behind the scenes, this “prophet” was no different than many others before him, using the offerings of the poor to live wealthy and comfortable in a mansion. The headlines are filled with the wealth of ministers today.



Peter, who warned Simon to “REPENT therefore of this thy wickedness...” (ACTS 8:20-23), also warns US with these words:

“...there shall be FALSE TEACHERS among you, who PRIVILY SHALL BRING IN damnable HERESIES, even DENYING (TO CONTRADICT) the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And MANY shall FOLLOW (OBEY; YIELD TO) their PERNICIOUS WAYS (RUIN; LOSS); by reason of whom the way of truth shall be EVIL SPOKEN OF (TO DEFAME). And through COVETOUSNESS (TOO GREAT A DESIRE TO HAVE WEALTH; GREED FOR RICHES) shall they with FEIGNED (FICTITIOUS) words make merchandise of YOU: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not” (2 PETER 2:1-3).

Simon knew nothing about the Holy Spirit, and neither do the “Simons” of our day. They don’t believe that “he” is a person, and that he is in the world today. They “see” him as a wandering “influence” in the form of a dove. But the children of God know him.

The Holy Spirit is a PERSON, not an INFLUENCE. We are baptized into the body of Christ by him the moment we believe (GAL. 3:27). He doesn’t “influence” the believer, he instructs the believer; he comforts the believer (JOHN 14:18); he leads the believer (ROM. 8:14); he

guides the believer into ALL TRUTH (JOHN 16:13); he seals the believer unto the day of redemption (EPH. 4:30); and “...ye NEED NOT that any man teach you: but as the same anointing (THE HOLY SPIRIT) teacheth YOU of ALL things” (1 JOHN 2:27).

But most importantly, the Holy Spirit permanently dwells IN every believer (ROM. 8:9, 11; 1 COR. 3:16; JOHN 14:17). This is why Jesus said, “...The kingdom of God cometh not with observation...for, behold, the kingdom of God is WITHIN you” (LUKE 17:20, 21), in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Like Simon, most of today’s religious leaders want to be relied on; they want you to believe that they alone have a “very special anointing.” They want to be your only teacher because of COVETOUSNESS.

They do not believe the words of Peter when he said, “...no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation,” because they entice YOU to feed on other translations, which are someone else’s “private interpretations” (2 PETER 1:20-21).

Paul certainly describes what man will be like in the last days as, “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 TIM. 3:1-5).

The “power” that religion denies is the Holy Spirit himself, whose purpose is to lead you, to teach you, to guide you, to seal you and dwell in you because you are born of God.

We “...are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto ALL that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may SEE your good works, and glorify [NOT YOU, BUT] your Father which is in heaven” (MATTHEW 5:14-16). Our duty is to be a light, not an “influence.”

Simon is dead, but there are many “Simons” with us today. Jesus said, “...they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (MATTHEW 15:14). Don’t be one of them.

“It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.” (PSALM 118:8)