

WEEK 5

OCTOBER 15, 2023

D i g g i n g D E E P E R

Scattered: Simon the Magician

SIMON MAGUS

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Simon Magus (Greek Σίμων ὁ μάγος, Latin: Simon Magus), also known as Simon the Sorcerer or Simon the Magician, was a religious figure whose confrontation with Peter is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The act of simony, or paying for position, is named after Simon, who tried to buy his way into the power of the Apostles.

According to Acts, Simon was a Samaritan magus or religious figure of the 1st century AD and a convert to Christianity, baptised by Philip the Evangelist. Simon later clashed with Peter. Accounts of Simon by writers of the second century exist, but are not considered verifiable. Surviving traditions about Simon appear in orthodox texts, such as those of Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius, where he is often described as the founder of Gnosticism, which has been accepted by some modern scholars, while others reject claims that he was a Gnostic, maintaining that he was merely considered to be one by the Church Fathers.



Justin, who was himself a 2nd-century native of Samaria, wrote that nearly all the Samaritans in his time were adherents of a certain Simon of Gitta, a village not far from Flavia Neapolis. Irenaeus believed him to have been the founder of the sect of the Simonians. Hippolytus quotes from a work he attributes to Simon or his followers the Simonians, Apophasis Megale, or Great Declaration. According to the early church heresiologists, Simon is also supposed to have written several lost treatises, two of which bear the titles The Four Quarters of the World and The Sermons of the Refuter.

In apocryphal works including the Acts of Peter, Pseudo-Clementines, and the Epistle of the Apostles, Simon also appears as a formidable sorcerer with the ability to levitate and fly at will. He is sometimes referred to as "the Bad Samaritan" due to his malevolent character. The Apostolic Constitutions also accuses him of "lawlessness" (antinomianism).

Questions To Ask When Reading The Bible

Sometimes when we read a passage in the Bible it can be confusing or we may not know how to best figure out what it is saying. Below are some good questions to ask when reading the Bible to help make the Bible make sense.

1. What stands out to me?

Note that this does not say “What does this passage mean?” Consider what stood out to you? What did you notice? What did the Holy Spirit highlight for you as you read it?

2. What does the text say about the character/nature of God?

The Scriptures are primarily about God so ask first what the text says about Him before moving to what it says about us, about His plan, or about anything else.

3. What does the text say?

Look at what the text literally says first (this may not be the intent of the text but it is important to look at it as read... at least initially).

4. How is it saying it?

What is the genre of the text and how should we read text in that genre?

5. Why does it say it that way?

Speculate about why the author chose this method of saying what they've said.

6. What is it trying to say?

Getting behind the Scripture, looking at its context, its original audience, its author, etc., what is the text trying to get across to the reader (both the original audience and us today?)

7. How does this fit into the whole of the book and the whole of Scripture?

Looking at the whole book, does what is being said jive with the whole book, with the whole of Scripture?

8. What questions do I have?

Do you have questions about the text? If they aren't answered in the text, are they good questions or are we asking questions that the text isn't meant to answer?

9. How do I feel about this teaching/text? Why do I feel that way?

What does your gut say? Are you frustrated with it? Are you trying to make it say something else than what it says? Does it make you uncomfortable? Where are these feelings coming from? Is there sin in my life I need to repent of?

10. What is the universal application of this text/teaching?

What are we to do with this text? Consider the original audience as well as us today.

11. What is my personal application?

What is God calling you to apply with what you've learned with this text?

12. How will I apply what it calls me to?

Make a plan to apply what God has taught you. Seek to be faithful and obedient to His leading, wherever it may go.