

May 21, 2023
Acts 8:14-25
"Bridge Building"

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Peter and John were sent to Samaria to lay hands on the people who had believed in Jesus to receive the Holy Spirit. The purpose was to have eye witness accounts from two of the 12 apostles abiding in Jerusalem. There was no denying it, the Samaritans had genuinely become a part of the Lord's church. Just like all the Hebraic Jews who had believed in Jesus over in Jerusalem the Samaritans had become a part of the Lord's church.

The delay of the receiving of the Holy Spirit by those in Samaria was due to the Lord's plan to make it plain that Jesus is the Head of the church and not of many different churches. This was done to authenticate that the Samaritans were a genuine part of God's Church just the same as all those who had trusted in Jesus as Savior back in Jerusalem. The goal was to prevent schisms within the body of believers.

All genuinely born again followers of Jesus Christ who have received Jesus as Savior are a part of the holy catholic church. This is not to be confused with the Roman Catholic Church nor the Orthodox Catholic Church. The term "catholic" means universal. So all genuine believers are a part of this one church of which Christ is Head.

Simon the sorcerer tried to buy the ability to lay hands on people to receive the Holy Spirit just Peter and John had done. No part of the ministry is for sale. The apostles had been called by God to do this. A term called "simony" came out of all of this which really happened in church history. There was a time that offices within the church were sold or bought, this is not biblical. The root of this offense goes all the way back here to Simon the sorcerer in our pericope today.

Application:

The spread of the gospel results in people being saved. The Lord went to great lengths in Samaria to demonstrate that all who are saved belong to His church. Bridges were being built across cultural and racial lines. There are millions of new immigrants from countries all around the world within our borders here in the USA. Let's look at them as brothers and sisters in Christ if they are saved OR as people who need the Lord. It is our privilege to share Jesus with them as our paths cross. Pray to be able to share your faith often with boldness. If not you, then who?