

The Holy Spirit is Not for Sale

Key Verse: “*Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*”
—Acts 8:22

Selected Scripture:
Acts 8:9-24

THE TERM “HOLY SPIRIT”

can be defined as follows: God’s will, influence, or power, exercised for any purpose he designs, through either mechanical or intelligent agencies. As used in the Bible, the word “Spirit” is the translation of the Hebrew word *ruach* in the Old Testament, and the Greek word *pneuma* in the New Testament. Both words have the

meaning of “wind,” “current of air,” or “breath.” Because these are all invisible but powerful forces, *ruach* and *pneuma* both properly represent any invisible power or influence whose source is God.

As the breath of life, the Holy Spirit—*ruach*—denotes the power by which man lives. It is also, along with *pneuma*, a power which can influence or guide the mind. It should be emphasized that the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is a power and influence—not a being or person.—Gen. 6:17; Ps. 51:11; Isa. 42:1; Luke 11:13

In God’s plan, the Day of Pentecost denoted the time at which he instituted a special “begetting” of his Holy Spirit in the minds of the Apostles and other disciples of Jesus. Because it is an invisible power, however, God saw the need to provide certain miraculous signs—called

“gifts”—as visible evidences to the Early Church that his Spirit was now to be a powerful force in their minds and lives. These “gifts” were first given to the Apostles, who then were authorized to confer them to others by the “laying on of hands”—another outward sign. Although the “gifts” were of various types, the primary purpose they served was to assist early Christian believers with their understanding of the Word of God. They also provided clear evidence that the Early Church was established by God’s authority—not man’s.—I Cor. 12:4,8-10,28-31; Acts 8:14-17

The context of our Key Verse is with regard to an experience Philip and Peter had with a man named Simon. In Acts 8:9-11, we are told that Simon was a sorcerer in the region of Samaria. Philip had traveled to Samaria to preach “the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ,” and many believed and were baptized.” (vs. 12) Simon also believed, and was baptized. He continued with Philip, and witnessed the “miracles and signs which were done.”—vs. 13

We are then told that the apostles who were in Jerusalem, after hearing that many in Samaria had received the Word of God, sent Peter and John to the region. Upon their arrival, they gathered these new believers together. Peter and John prayed for them, and then “laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Spirit.” (vss. 14-17) When Simon saw this, he offered the apostles money, and asked if they would also give him the power to “lay hands” on new believers. (vss. 18,19) It took Peter’s sharp words to show Simon that he was dealing with God and holy things. He told him, “Thy money perish with thee, . . . for thy heart is not right in the sight of God,” to which he added the words of our Key Verse. Simon responded with some measure of repentance, saying, “Pray . . . for me.” (vs. 24) This lesson reminds us of Jesus’ words, “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”—Matt. 6:24 ■