

# “Amazed!”

“Previous to Philip’s arrival, a certain Simon had practiced magic in the city, posing as a famous man and dazzling all the Samaritans with his wizardry. He had them all, from little children to old men, eating out of his hand. They all thought he had supernatural powers, and called him “the Great Wizard.” He had been around a long time and everyone was more or less in awe of him. But when Philip came to town announcing the news of God’s kingdom and proclaiming the name of Jesus Christ, they forgot Simon and were baptised, becoming believers right and left! Even Simon himself believed and was baptised. From that moment he was like Philip’s shadow, so fascinated with all the God-signs and miracles that he wouldn’t leave Philip’s side. When the apostles in Jerusalem received the report that Samaria had accepted God’s Message, they sent Peter and John down to pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit. Up to this point they had only been baptised in the name of the Master Jesus; the Holy Spirit hadn’t yet fallen on them. Then the apostles laid their hands on them and they did receive the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw that the apostles by merely laying on hands conferred the Spirit, he pulled out his money, excited, and said, “Sell me your secret! Show me how you did that! How much do you want? Name your price!” Peter said, “To hell with your money! And you along with it. Why, that’s unthinkable—trying to buy God’s gift! You’ll never be part of what God is doing by striking bargains and offering bribes. Change your ways—and now! Ask the Master to forgive you for trying to use God to make money. I can see this is an old habit with you; you reek with money-lust.” “Oh!” said Simon, “pray for me! Pray to the Master that nothing like that will ever happen to me!” And with that, the apostles were on their way, continuing to witness and spread the Message of God’s salvation, preaching in every Samaritan town they passed through on their return to Jerusalem.” (Acts 8:9–25 MESSAGE)

The Big Question: “What is ‘amazing’ in this passage?”

- Amazing to the people involved at the time
- Amazing to you now