



BEACON

Vol. LV / No. 10

March 9, 2026

A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526
850-455-7595

A Tale of Two Sorcerers

Lee Moses

The Word of God condemns and justifies. Practices not in harmony with its teachings are condemned, but the same Word provides the means of justification for humble souls willing to change their practices. One practice that God has always condemned is sorcery (Deu. 18:10-12; Mal. 3:5; Gal. 5:20; Rev. 21:8). The New Testament speaks of two sorcerers who were blessed with the opportunity to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, they were blessed to know that their practices were condemned and to know what the means of their justification were.

Elymas

As Paul and Barnabas traveled through the island of Cyprus on Paul's first missionary journey, they met with the proconsul of the province, a "prudent man," or "man of understanding" (ASV), named Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:6-7). A Roman inscription in Cyprus identifies the proconsul as Quintus Sergius Paulus. The proconsul demonstrated his understanding and prudence by having two men of God preach the Gospel to him. However, the proconsul had with him a man who was not so prudent or understanding—a sorcerer named Elymas.

The Biblical account indicates that Elymas had an important position with the proconsul, likely as a highly trusted advisor. However, his advice on this occasion was not such as to benefit the proconsul, but such as to benefit his own position of prominence. Elymas "withstood" Paul and

Barnabas, particularly their preaching, "seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith" (13:8). The Gospel which Paul and Barnabas were preaching, even though it was the Word of God, went against the practices of Elymas and threatened his position of prominence.

By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul rebuked Elymas:

O full of all subtilty and all mischief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season (13:10-11).

And indeed, Elymas was struck blind for a period of time, to further rebuke him for his stubbornness and pride. Elymas had heard the Gospel, understood that it condemned his practices, and therefore "withstood" it.

Simon

The Holy Spirit describes Simon as a very prominent and powerful man in a city of Samaria, but a sorcerer:

But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he

had bewitched them with sorceries (Acts 8:9-11).

Despite the complete sway that Simon and his sorcery held over the city, a Gospel preacher from Jerusalem named Philip was able to preach “Christ unto them” and “when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (8:5, 12). No longer were the people of Samaria under the sway of Simon; as a matter of fact, they had completely turned away from him. When this took place, one can only imagine the effect it had upon Simon’s pride. So, did Simon plot a way to regain his prior status? Did he plot a way to “get even” with Philip? No.

Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done (8:13).

One who had duped others for years with false miracles knew true miracles when he saw them. Although he had been dishonest, he was willing to admit honestly that the Gospel of Jesus Christ had a power far exceeding “the great power of God” that the people of Samaria had believed Simon held.

As with all new converts, Simon did not yet understand all that pertained to Christianity. The apostles had the special ability to transfer miraculous gifts to other Christians, and Simon offered Peter money to purchase this ability (8:18-19). For sorcerers to purchase the secrets to the tricks of other sorcerers was a common practice. However, Christianity was not akin to sorcery, and Peter rebuked Simon for equating the two (8:20-23). Peter was only an “unlearned and ignorant”

fisherman of Galilee (4:13), yet he dared to rebuke this prominent citizen of Samaria. Again, Simon demonstrated his humility before God, as he answered Peter and John, “Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me” (8:24). The practice of Christianity was contrary to what Simon’s practices had been when he lived as a sorcerer. Yet he was willing to humble himself and change his life to live as a Christian.

Those in positions of earthly prominence often find it difficult to humble themselves before God. “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*” (1 Cor. 1:26). As the apostle Paul preached the Gospel to mighty King Agrippa II, the king mocked Paul, “With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian” (Acts 26:28—ASV). Yet some in positions of prominence have obeyed the Gospel: Crispus, the chief ruler of the Corinthian synagogue (18:8); certain members of Caesar’s household (Phi. 4:22); and the proconsul Sergius Paulus, who believed as he heard and saw the testimony of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:12).

The Gospel opposes the practices of all those who do not walk in harmony with it. Elymas was both a man of prominence and was completely out of harmony with the will of God. Having both factors in place made Elymas unwilling to conform his practices to the Gospel, even though the Gospel held the very means of justification for the wrong which he had done. However, Simon was in a very similar position, yet he made the effort to do what was right. While each of our own positions in life might make us receptive to the Gospel and willing to change ourselves as it instructs, each of us can. This applies whether rich or poor; well-known or relatively anonymous; Christians, erring children of God, or those who have never obeyed the Gospel. This applies even to sorcerers.

Don’t worry about your reputation. Look after your character, and your reputation will take care of itself.

Author Unknown

Union City, TN

A Healthy Church Involves You and Needs You

Doug Post

It would be beneficial if we could each recognize the importance of our roles in the Lord's body—the church. Sometimes, we may think that our part in the work is so insignificant that it would not be missed if we did not do the thing that is ours to do. But that is never true. The church of our Lord must have the function of every one of its parts or *members*. None are unnecessary; all are vital. We need to be careful not to sell ourselves short in the Lord's work.

Probably none of us wants the body of the Lord to be crippled or diseased. We want to be a part of a group of spiritually vital people. But the church cannot be what it ought to be unless its members recognize the importance of each of their roles.

The Scriptures clearly teach (Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19) that **the church is healthy and grows when each member does his part**. No member can truthfully say they have no stake in the health and growth of the body. Whatever each does has an impact—for better or worse—on the body. The whole cannot be greater than the sum of its parts.

It so happens that the Lord's work, or at least part of it, is collaborative, a group effort. We are

stronger, and the work prospers more greatly when we work together. And each of us needs to recognize the importance of our contribution to the overall effort.

This week, let us devote some attention to the matter of our involvement in the Lord's work. As we study the Bible and discuss these things in our families, let us consider how we can serve more actively and fully in the work, which is, after all, the greatest in the world.

We are truly blessed to work and worship with fellow members who have much to offer. We need to bring out the best in one another, for the Lord's sake. So, let us resolve to find greater joy in our life in the Lord by delving more deeply into the work He has given us.

Irving, TX

Stop during the bustle and hurry and temptation of the day for thanksgiving and prayer. A few minutes spent alone with God at midday will go far to keep you calm amid the worries and anxieties of modern life.

R. A. Torrey

Genuine Faith

R. L. Whiteside

Genuine faith is based on evidence that admits no doubt, and to believe in a person means more than to believe that such a person exists. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

In addition to accepting the truth that God is, we confidently trust Him to fulfill His promises. In all genuine faith, there is, therefore, the element of confidence and trust. We trust Him to fulfill His promises and confide in His wisdom and goodness.

It is true that Abel heard God's command and obeyed, and therefore, he made his offering by faith (Gen. 4:4; Heb. 11:4). But there was something back of all that. Why did he do what God said, and why did Cain not do what God said? Abel had confidence in God's wisdom and goodness. Cain had confidence in his own wisdom and way. Hence, Abel followed God's way, and Cain followed his own way. Abel did what God commanded because he had more confidence in God than in himself.

Deceased

Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Sermons

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/sermons.html>

Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

YouTube Channel

[https://www.youtube.com/c/
BellviewChurchOfChrist](https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist)

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

Defender and Beacon

Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

bellviewcoc@gmail.com



Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Orville & Linda Worley

Carla Bureson

Bill & Pam Busch

Heather Stark

Phyllis Brantley

Please Remember

March 15

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

March 29

Fifth Sunday Dinner after the morning service. Singing and a devotional service at 1:00 pm.

Weekly Services

Sunday

Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Bellview Church of Christ

Bishops: Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

Minister: Tim Cozad