

*You Can't Buy  
Your Way Into  
Heaven*



*Acts 8:9-25*

*<sup>12b</sup>“there will be a time of great persecution.  
You will be dragged into synagogues and prisons,  
and you will stand trial before kings and governors  
because you are my followers. <sup>13</sup>But this will be your  
opportunity to tell them about me. <sup>14</sup>So don't worry in  
advance about how to answer the charges against you,  
<sup>15</sup>for I will give you the right words and such wisdom  
that none of your opponents will be able  
to reply or refute you!*

*Luke 21:12b-15 <sup>NLT</sup>*

*<sup>16</sup>Even those closest to you—  
your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends—  
will betray you. They will even kill some of you.*

*<sup>17</sup>And everyone will hate you  
because you are my followers.*

*<sup>18</sup>But not a hair of your head will perish!*

*<sup>19</sup>By standing firm, you will win your souls.*

*Luke 21:16-19 <sup>NLT</sup>*

# You Can't Buy Your Way Into Heaven

Persecution Builds God's Church

The Holy Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ God's Church

Selfish Desire \_\_\_\_\_ God's Church

*<sup>1</sup>Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen. A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria. <sup>2</sup>Some devout men came and buried Stephen with great mourning. <sup>3</sup>But Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison.*

*Acts 8:1-3 <sup>NLT</sup>*

*<sup>4</sup>But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went. <sup>5</sup>Philip, for example, went to the city of Samaria and told the people there about the Messiah. <sup>6</sup>Crowds listened intently to Philip because they were eager to hear his message and see the miraculous signs he did. <sup>7</sup>Many evil spirits were cast out, screaming as they left their victims. And many who had been paralyzed or lame were healed. <sup>8</sup>So there was great joy in that city.*

*Acts 8:4-8 <sup>NLT</sup>*

*<sup>2</sup>Consider it pure joy, my brothers,  
whenever you face trials of many kinds,  
<sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith  
develops perseverance. <sup>4</sup>Perseverance must finish  
its work so that you may be mature and complete,  
not lacking anything.*

*James 1:2-4 <sup>NLT</sup>*

*<sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup>But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup>That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup>he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.*

*James 1:5-8 <sup>NLT</sup>*

You Can't Buy Your Way Into Heaven

Persecution Builds God's Church

The Holy Spirit Identifies God's Church

Selfish Desire \_\_\_\_\_ God's Church

*<sup>14</sup>When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God's message, they sent Peter and John there. <sup>15</sup>As soon as they arrived, they prayed for these new believers to receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>16</sup>The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them, for they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup>Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they received the Holy Spirit.*

*Acts 8:14-17 <sup>NLT</sup>*

*<sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup>Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup>Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. <sup>26</sup>Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.*

*Galatians 5:22-26 <sup>NLT</sup>*

*<sup>9</sup>The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. <sup>10</sup>But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower. <sup>11</sup>For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business. <sup>12</sup>Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*

*James 1:9-12 <sup>NLT</sup>*

*<sup>22</sup>Do not merely listen to the word,  
and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

*<sup>23</sup>Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what  
it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror*

*<sup>24</sup>and, after looking at himself, goes away and  
immediately forgets what he looks like.*

*James 1:22-24<sup>NLT</sup>*

*25 But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does. 26 If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. 27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.*

*James 1:25-27 <sup>NLT</sup>*

You Can't Buy Your Way Into Heaven

Persecution Builds God's Church

The Holy Spirit Identifies God's Church

Selfish Desire Opposes God's Church

*<sup>9</sup>Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, <sup>10</sup>and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is the divine power known as the Great Power." <sup>11</sup>They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic.*

*Acts 8:9-11 <sup>NIV</sup>*

*<sup>12</sup>But now the people believed Philip's message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized. <sup>13</sup>Then Simon himself believed and was baptized. He began following Philip wherever he went, and he was amazed by the great miracles and signs Philip performed.*

*Acts 8:12, 13<sup>NLT</sup>*

*<sup>23</sup>Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. <sup>24</sup>But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew human nature. <sup>25</sup>No one needed to tell him what mankind is really like.*

*John 2:23-25 <sup>NLT</sup>*

*The heart is deceitful  
above all things and beyond cure.*

*Who can understand it?*

*Jeremiah 17:9<sup>NIV</sup>*

*<sup>18</sup>Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, <sup>19</sup>saying, "Give me also this power so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."*

*Acts 8:18, 19<sup>NRSV</sup>*

*<sup>20</sup>Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! <sup>21</sup>You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. <sup>22</sup>Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. <sup>23</sup>For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin." <sup>24</sup>Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me."*

*Acts 8:20-24 <sup>NLT</sup>*

*<sup>13</sup>When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; <sup>14</sup>but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. <sup>15</sup>Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

*James 1:13-15 <sup>NLT</sup>*

*<sup>16</sup>Don't be deceived, my dear brothers.*

*<sup>17</sup>Every good and perfect gift is from above,  
coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights,  
who does not change like shifting shadows. <sup>18</sup>He chose  
to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might  
be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.*

*James 1:16-18<sup>NLT</sup>*

*<sup>19</sup>My dear brothers, take note of this:*

*Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak  
and slow to become angry, <sup>20</sup>for man's anger does not  
bring about the righteous life that God desires.*

*<sup>21</sup>Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is  
so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you,  
which can save you.*

*James 1:19-21 <sup>NLT</sup>*