



Walking with the Spirit through the Book of Acts

Pastor Michael Cranford

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Schedule

April 7	The Holy Spirit
April 14	Acts 1:1-9
April 21	Acts 1:10-26
April 28	Acts 2:1-13
May 5	Acts 2:14-47
May 12	BREAK (Mother's Day)
May 19	Acts 3:1-26
May 26	Acts 4:1-21
June 2	Acts 4:22-5:11
June 9	Acts 5:12-42
June 16	BREAK (Father's Day)
June 23	Acts 6:1-15
June 30	Acts 7:2-60; 8:1-4
July 7	Acts 8:5-40



Hero #2: The Man Without Boundaries

I. As a result of the scattering of disciples from Jerusalem, one of the seven, Philip, ends up in Samaria and proclaims the message of Christ. (Acts 8:5)

Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. (Acts 8:5)

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” (John 4:7-10)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. (Rom 1:16)

Hero #2: The Man Without Boundaries

2. Philip's message is accompanied by the power of the Spirit, evident in signs of the Spirit's working. This is the same as Stephen, Peter and the apostles, and (as we will see) Paul. The Spirit reveals his power and presence (in diverse but unmistakable ways) when his agenda is being addressed in people who follow the pattern of those who serve him. The result is freedom and life (which is also a sign of the Spirit's work). (Acts 8:6-8)

When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city. (Acts 8:6-8)



Hero #2: The Man Without Boundaries

But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, “We have seen remarkable things today.” (Luke 5:24-26)



Hero #2: The Man Without Boundaries

3. Satan Part 1: The work of the Spirit is opposed by Satan's counterfeit to the Spirit's power. But the counterfeit cannot free people from illness or the demonic (it does the opposite). (Acts 8:4)

Satan counterfeits the power of the Spirit in two ways:

- a) With secular force through culture or institutions that wield control over people;
- b) With lies (imitation) of inner, spiritual work or independent authority and control over nature (Exod. 7:10-12, 20-21; 8:18-19). This is abominable to God (Exod 22:18; Deut 18:10-12), but ironically, is rampant in the "church" today.



Satan counterfeits the power of the Spirit

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, and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, “This man is rightly called the Great Power of God.” They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw. (Acts 8:9-13)



Satan counterfeits the power of the Spirit

So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the LORD commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret arts: Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. (Exod 7:10-12)

Then the fish that were in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. And the blood was through all the land of Egypt. But the soothsayer priests of Egypt did the same with their secret arts; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had said. (Exod 7:21-22)

But when the magicians tried to produce gnats by their secret arts, they could not. Since the gnats were on people and animals everywhere, the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." (Exod 8:18-19)

Satan counterfeits the power of the Spirit

Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.”

“Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give all he has for his own life. But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.”

So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. (Job 2:3-7)

Satan counterfeits the power of the Spirit

“Do not allow a sorceress to live.” (Exod 22:18)

Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD; because of these same detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. (Deut 18:10-12)



The Spirit's Movement Beyond Jerusalem

4. The news that the Samaritans were accepting the message of salvation prompted the apostles to see and validate what was happening. They prayed for the believers to receive the Holy Spirit, and they did—just as at Pentecost, when the Spirit was received for the first time by faithful Jews. (Acts 8:14-17)

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:14-17)



The Spirit's Movement Beyond Jerusalem

- a) The coming/receiving of the Spirit is different than salvation by faith.
- b) The fact that the Spirit came/was received at a different point in time than the moment of salvation does not indicate that it normally (or ever, aside from the times noted) happens this way.



The Spirit's Movement Beyond Jerusalem

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. (Rom 8:9)

For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. (1 Cor 12:13)

I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? (Gal 3:2)



The Spirit's Movement Beyond Jerusalem

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory. (Eph 1:13-14)

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Eph 4:30)

To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood (1 Pet 1:1b-2)

The Spirit's Movement Beyond Jerusalem

5. Satan Part 2: Simon wants power for his own ends. One of the true indications that the Spirit is not working is the promotion of self-interest over against the Spirit's work. (Acts 8:18-24)

Syncretism in the church:

- Positive confession – Name it and claim it
- Intercession as a specialized power – The lure of hidden knowledge and power
- Emotion, sound, lighting, and mood – The disconnect of the rational
- The promise of wealth, power, success, experiences – The consumer church
- Independent status as a subterfuge for a lack of moral and theological accountability

The Spirit's Movement Beyond Jerusalem

5. Satan Part 2: Simon wants power for his own ends. One of the true indications that the Spirit is not working is the promotion of self-interest over against the Spirit's work. (Acts 8:18-24)

a) The mere fact that someone indicates a desire for something good doesn't mean it's not coming from sinful intentions. The veneer of divine power is a counterfeit for the legitimate work of God.

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." (Acts 8:18-19)



The Spirit's Movement Beyond Jerusalem

b) The fact that money could be seen as an exchange or qualification for spirituality (or ministry) is a sign that worldly values have crept into the work of the church. The Spirit's power is not available for money. People who offer it for money are not legitimate agents on behalf of the Spirit.

Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin." Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me." (Acts 8:20-24)

The Spirit's Movement Beyond Jerusalem

6. The Jerusalem church as a whole stood in support of God's work among non-Jews, submitting to the Spirit's intentions (however mysterious they seemed to be at this phase in the growth of the church). Spirit-led leadership can discern the true work of the Spirit.

After they had further proclaimed the word of the Lord and testified about Jesus, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages. (Acts 8:25)



The Spirit's Movement Beyond Jerusalem

7. The Spirit uses Philip to reach a Gentile (a Godfearer) who is from a foreign land and happens to be reading a messianic passage (Isa 53), showing a further deliberate intention by the Spirit to reach the ends of the earth with the word of salvation and his power (Acts 8:26-40; cf. Acts 1:8).

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet.

The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” (Acts 8:26-29)

The Spirit's Movement Beyond Jerusalem

Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.

Who can speak of his descendants?

For his life was taken from the earth.”

The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. (Acts 8:30-35)

The Spirit's Movement Beyond Jerusalem



The Spirit's Movement Beyond Jerusalem

a) Scripture reminds us that God is sovereign over all nations (including and specifically Africa)

“Are not you Israelites

the same to me as the Cushites?”

declares the LORD.

“Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt,
the Philistines from Caphtor
and the Arameans from Kir?” (Amos 9:7)



The Spirit's Movement Beyond Jerusalem

b) The Spirit controls all the precedents. He brings the right people together at the right moment, and can act deliberately (and articulately) to make events happen to meet his agenda.



The Spirit's Movement Beyond Jerusalem

c) The Lord has never been ethnocentric.
What matters to him is (and has always been)
faithfulness and obedience.

Let no foreigner who is bound to the LORD say,

“The LORD will surely exclude me from his
people.”

And let no eunuch complain,

“I am only a dry tree.”

For this is what the LORD says:

“To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths,
who choose what pleases me
and hold fast to my covenant—
to them I will give within my temple and its
walls

a memorial and a name

better than sons and daughters;

I will give them an everlasting name

that will endure forever.” (Isa 56:3-5)

