



Walking with the Spirit through the Book of Acts

Pastor Michael Cranford

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Schedule

April 7	The Holy Spirit	Sept 8	Acts 9:32-10:48
April 14	Acts 1:1-9	Sept 16	Acts 11:1-12:25
April 21	Acts 1:10-26	Sept 22	Acts 13:1-14:28
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 8:5-25		
July 14	Acts 8:26-9:31		



Paul and Barnabas Return to Antioch – With Mark

I. That the Jewish Christians were operating from the old (and incorrect) mindset is clear when they accused Peter of having table fellowship with Gentiles. (Acts 11:1-3)

When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark. (Acts 12:25)

My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) (Col 4:10)

She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ. (1 Pet 5:13-14)

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Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:1-3)



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I. Stop 1: Cyprus. The first miraculous work of the Spirit happens through Paul as he confronts demonic (sorcerous) opposition. The Spirit works through people who fit the pattern after years of proven faithfulness and undivided heart.

The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper. (Acts 13:4-5)



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Salamis



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Paphos



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They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, “You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun.”

Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord. (Acts 13:6-12)

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I persevered in demonstrating among you the marks of a true apostle, including signs, wonders and miracles.
(2 Cor 12:12)

The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!” He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. “Where is your faith?” he asked his disciples. (Luke 8:24-25)

A man in the crowd called out, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him. I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not.” “You unbelieving and perverse **generation**,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here.” (Luke 9:38-41)

The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” He replied, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you.” (Luke 17:5-6)

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2. Stop 2: Pamphilia (Perga) to Galatia (Pisidian Antioch). Paul's normal approach is to start with Jews and Godfearers in the local synagogues and only turns to Gentiles when he faces large-scale rejection of the gospel. This is the approach that makes sense of God's expressed intent and vindicates the Gentile mission. (Acts 13:13-15)

From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak." (Acts 13:13-15)



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Perga



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Roman roads



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Roman roads



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Pisidian Antioch



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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)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.” (Acts 9:15-16)



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On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised. For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along. (Gal 2:7-10)



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a) Paul begins his message of appeal to Jews by citing the history of Israel beginning with Egypt through the promised land. The central figure in this history is God's power, despite the unfaithfulness of Israel. (Acts 13:16-20)

Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness; and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance. All this took about 450 years.



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b) Paul's message then shifts to God's work through individuals, culminating in one man who finally fits the pattern: He was a man after God's own heart (1 Sam 13:14), who does what God wants. (Acts 13:20-22)

“After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.’ (Acts 13:20-22)



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c) David's descendants led to Jesus, Israel's savior. Jesus was identified by John the Baptist for the sake of Israel. But Israel rejected Jesus, and in doing so, fulfilled scripture. (Acts 13:23-31)

“From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. As John was completing his work, he said: ‘Who do you suppose I am? I am not the one you are looking for. But there is one coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.’



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“Fellow children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.

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The Spirit Confirms the Gentiles

Jesus looked directly at them and asked, “Then what is the meaning of that which is written:

“The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone?”

Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.” The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people. (Luke 20:17-19; Acts 4:11)



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d) The specific prophecies that were fulfilled were in Psalm 2, that God would send a son, that he would receive all the promises made to David, and that his body would not be subject to decay (Ps 16:10). These promises were not received by David but were fulfilled in Jesus. (Acts 13:32-37)

“We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm:

“You are my son;

today I have become your father.’

God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay. As God has said,

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“I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.’

So it is also stated elsewhere:

“You will not let your holy one see decay.’

“Now when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

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The Spirit Confirms the Gentiles

e) In his conclusion, Paul gives the hearers the chance to become part of God's work of salvation through Christ, though warns that some will not believe. (Some within Israel have always refused to believe God.) (Acts 13:38-43)

“Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses. Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you:



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“Look, you scoffers,
wonder and perish,
for I am going to do something in your days
that you would never believe,
even if someone told you.”

As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

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3. The church grows in Pisidian Antioch through Gentile conversion and faces intense cultural and religious opposition. The true work of the Spirit is always opposed. When the work of the Spirit is complete in that region, they move to the next destination. This became the pattern of their ministry. (Acts 13:44-52)

On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him.

Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us:

The First Missionary Journey:

The Spirit Confirms the Gentiles

“I have made you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and **all who were appointed for eternal life believed.**

The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. So they **shook the dust off their feet** as a warning to them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:44-52)

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Iconium



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4. Paul and Barnabas continue their approach in Iconium, with the same results, but with the Spirit enabling them to perform signs and wonders as a confirmation of the message. The power of the Spirit always happens this way in Acts—as a way to validate the message and the messengers. (Acts 14:1-7)

At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders.

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The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. There was a plot afoot among both Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, where they continued to preach the gospel.



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5. One of the examples of signs and wonders occurs in the next city, Lystra, where Paul performs a similar act to Peter (Acts 3), healing a man who was lame from birth. The Lycaonians think Paul and Barnabas are gods and try to honor them as such. They immediately reject the association and direct their attention to the true God. (Acts 14:8-18) Those who follow the pattern (of people the Spirit uses) give glory to God.

In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, “Stand up on your feet!” At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.



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Lystra



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When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: “Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. In the past, he let all nations go their own way. Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.” Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

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The Spirit Confirms the Gentiles

6. The opposition to the message and the work of the Spirit in Lystra is similar, but this time, Paul is stoned and nearly left for dead by the crowds. This causes them to move on again, heading to another city, Derbe, after which they returned to the previous cities (and new churches) to strengthen and encourage them, appointing leaders, and assuring them that hardship is part of the journey. They then return to Syrian Antioch. (Acts 14:19-28)

Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

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The Spirit Confirms the Gentiles

They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. **“We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said.** Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia, and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

