



# 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	Sept 29	Acts 15:1-16:40
May 5	Acts 2:14-47	Oct 6	Acts 17:1-18:28
May 12	BREAK (Mother's Day)	Oct 13	Acts 19:1-20:38
May 19	Acts 3:1-26	Oct 20	Acts 21:1-22:30
May 26	Acts 4:1-21	Oct 27	Acts 23:1-24:27
June 2	Acts 4:22-5:11	Nov 3	Acts 25:1-28:30
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		



# The Jerusalem Council: The Gentile Problem

Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.” (Acts 15:1-5)

# The Jerusalem Council: The Gentile Problem

I. The reason the Council concluded that Gentile believers do not need to receive circumcision is because of something God did: He accepted Gentiles without the need for coming under the law, confirmed by the work of the Spirit. The implications of this (for the law's applicability) were implied but not part of the Council's conclusion.

The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are." (Acts 15:6-11)

# The Jerusalem Council: The Gentile Problem

2. This implies that Christianity is not something new but rather a continuation of something always planned for God's people.

The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. When they finished, James spoke up. "Brothers," he said, "listen to me. Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:



# The Jerusalem Council: The Gentile Problem

2. This implies that Christianity is not something new but rather a continuation of something always planned for God's people.

“After this I will return  
and rebuild David's fallen tent.  
Its ruins I will rebuild,  
and I will restore it,  
that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,  
even all the Gentiles who bear my name,  
says the Lord, who does these things'—  
things known from long ago.” (Acts 15:12-18)



# The Jerusalem Council: The Gentile Problem

Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. (Gen 17:3-6)

Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

(Rom 4:16-17)

# The Jerusalem Council: The Gentile Problem

“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant  
to restore the tribes of Jacob  
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.  
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,  
that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”

This is what the LORD says—  
the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel—  
to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation,  
to the servant of rulers:

“Kings will see you and stand up,  
princes will see and bow down,  
because of the LORD, who is faithful,  
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.” (Isa 49:6-7)



# The Jerusalem Council: The Gentile Problem

3. The law of Moses was always intended to be transitional with regard to its application. This does not mean it does not function as truth for people of all time, but rather was specifically applicable to the people of Israel. Parts of it are therefore not specifically applicable to God's people in the current age.

Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. (Gal 3:23-25)

You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (2 Cor 3:3)

# The Jerusalem Council: The Gentile Problem

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For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. (Eph 2:14-16)



# The Jerusalem Council: The Gentile Problem

4. What is at stake is God's plan to save the world. If the circumcision-group is right, then there is no mission to Gentiles as Gentiles. Forced submission to the law of Moses might mean rejection of the gospel on cultural grounds that God considers irrelevant.

On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matt 9:12-13)

They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world." (John 4:42)

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. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." (Rom 1:16-17)

# The Jerusalem Council: The Gentile Problem

5. Nonetheless, maintaining fellowship among believing Jews who have followed ceremonial laws their entire life is not unnecessarily burdensome, therefore the Gentile converts should act in a way that is conducive to that fellowship, without the need for circumcision.

“It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.” Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders among the believers. With them they sent the following letter:

# The Jerusalem Council: The Gentile Problem

The apostles and elders, your brothers,  
To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:

Greetings.

We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell. (Acts 15:19-29)

# The Jerusalem Council: The Gentile Problem

6. In the end, the Council's letter was used to confirm the mission to the Gentiles, which implies there were people (Jewish Christians) who were opposed to the decision.

So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers. After spending some time there, they were sent off by the believers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord. (Acts 15:30-35)



# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

- I. Paul takes new companions on his second missionary journey.
  - a) He doesn't want to take John Mark because Mark had deserted them during the first missionary journey.

Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. (Acts 15:36-41)

# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. (2 Tim 4:11)





# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

b) Instead of Barnabas, he brings Silas (also known as Silvanus).

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and **Silas** and Timothy—was not “Yes” and “No,” but in him it has always been “Yes.” (2 Cor 1:19)

Paul, **Silas** and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace to you. (1 Thess 1:1)



# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

c) Early into the journey he returns to Lystra and is joined by a young disciple named Timothy. Timothy ends up as Paul's protégé and close companion.

Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers. (Acts 16:1-5)

But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. (Phil 2:22)

# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

d) The other member of the group is the Holy Spirit. He is with them and leads them actively, even though there are no missionary “wins” at this phase in the journey. Sometimes the Spirit leads us through difficulties before we see him work powerfully.

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, **having been kept by the Holy Spirit** from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but **the Spirit of Jesus** would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night **Paul had a vision** of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that **God had called us** to preach the gospel to them. (Acts 16:6-10)

# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

e) In Troas, Paul is joined by Luke. Luke (who is the author of Acts) doesn't include himself in the story by name, but the narrative shifts to the **first** person plural to indicate that he is part of the group.

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When **they** came to the border of Mysia, **they** tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So **they** passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, **we** got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called **us** to preach the gospel to them. (Acts 16:6-10)

# The Second Missionary Journey: The Spirit Meets Opposition



Troas



# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

e) In Troas, Paul is joined by Luke. Luke (who is the author of Acts) doesn't include himself in the story by name, but the narrative shifts to the third person plural to indicate that he is part of the group.

Indeed Luke was an Antiochene Syrian, a doctor by profession, a disciple of the apostles: later however he followed Paul until his martyrdom, serving the Lord blamelessly. He never had a wife, he never fathered children, and died at the age of eighty-four, full of the Holy Spirit, in Boetia. (*Anti-Marcionite Prologue to the Gospels*)

Our dear friend **Luke**, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. (Col 4:14)



# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

2. After passing through Galatia (Asia Minor), the group finally arrives in Europe. Arriving at the port of Neapolis, they travel inland along with Via Egnatia (a prominent Roman road) to the city of Philippi.

From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. (Acts 16:11-12)



# The Second Missionary Journey: The Spirit Meets Opposition



Samothrace



Neapolis



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# The Second Missionary Journey:

The Spirit Meets Opposition

Via Egnatia

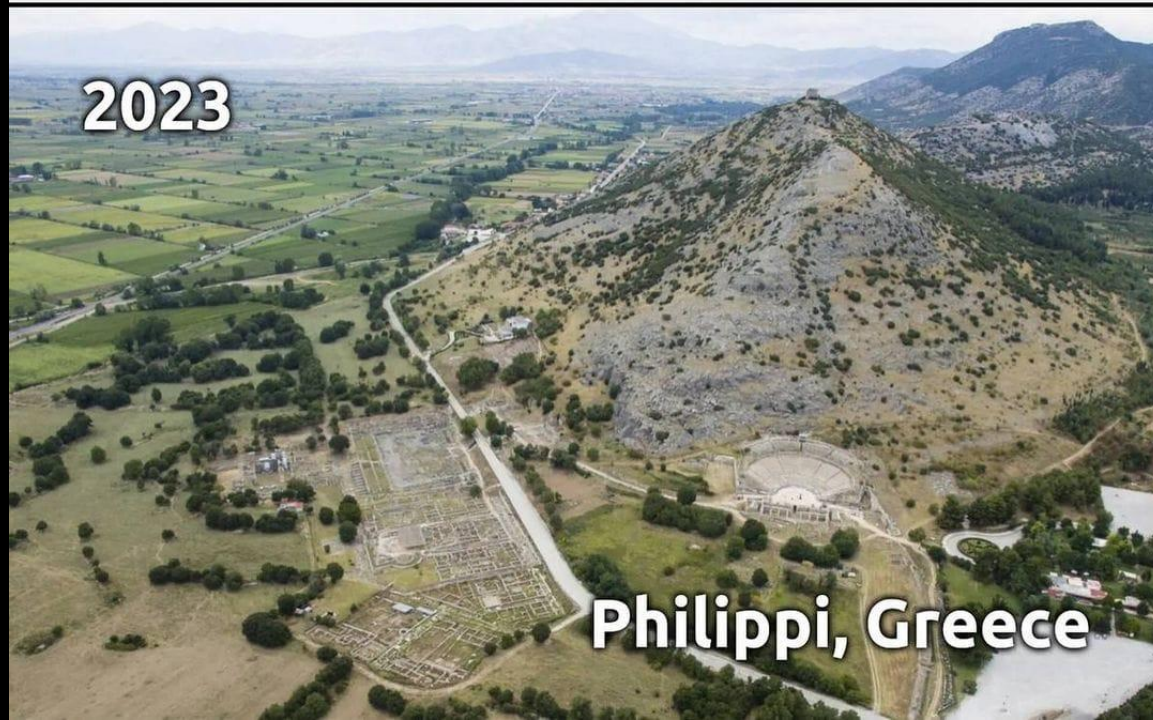


Philippi

200 BC



2023



Philippi, Greece



# The Second Missionary Journey: The Spirit Meets Opposition

The Spirit Meets Opposition

Philippi



# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

- a) The first convert specifically noted on this trip is a woman—an affluent citizen of Thyatira who is living in Philippi and owns a home.

On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us. (Acts 16:13-15)



# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

a) The first convert specifically noted on this trip is a woman—an affluent citizen of Thyatira who is living in Philippi and owns a home.



# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

b) The missionaries draw the attention of the demonic, which is operating behind the scenes in Philippi. The demonic is always at work in the book of Acts, behind the scenes, and looks like a counterfeit of the work of the Spirit.

Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her. (Acts 16:16-18)

# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. (1 Cor 2:7-8)

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Eph 6:12)

...in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes. (2 Cor 2:11)





# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

c) The actual goal of the demonic is to stop the progress of the gospel. The way this normally happens (seen in the book of Acts) is by engaging and motivating culture. While it is the crowds who rise up to oppose the missionaries, we are reminded that the battle isn't against flesh and blood.

When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."



# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

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The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. (Acts 16:19-24)

Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea. (2 Cor 11:25)

# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

d) The Spirit is powerful both in physical and spiritual realms; his purposes cannot be stopped. Circumstances are not a coincidence if you are living the Spirit's purposes. And you do not have to worry about anything.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" (Acts 16:25-28)



# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

e) The end of the matter, here and throughout Acts, is salvation for those who believe.

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household. (Acts 16:29-34)

# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

f) The circumstances serve another, less obvious purpose: The Spirit leads the missionaries onward, to new cities and new opportunities for the gospel. Even problems are part of his plan.

When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: “Release those men.” The jailer told Paul, “The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace.”

But Paul said to the officers: “They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out.”

# The Second Missionary Journey:

## The Spirit Meets Opposition

f) The circumstances serve another, less obvious purpose: The Spirit leads the missionaries onward, to new cities and new opportunities for the gospel. Even problems are part of his plan.

The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left. (Acts 16:35-40)

