



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 13:1-14:7
April 28	Acts 2:1-13	Sept 29	Acts 14:8-16:10
May 5	Acts 2:14-47	Oct 6	Acts 16:11-17:23
May 12	BREAK (Mother's Day)	Oct 13	Acts 17:24-18:28
May 19	Acts 3:1-26	Oct 20	Acts 19:1-22:30
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 Second Missionary Journey: The Spirit Meets Opposition



Athens



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c) Paul begins his speech by directing attention to an idol to an unknown god. In other words, he starts with a point of common ground—something that his audience already believes, which in this case is the existence of a god they don't know anything about.

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. (Acts 17:22-23)



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To an
unknown
god



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d) Paul then distinguishes the God of the Bible from the gods they build idols to—by claiming that the true God made everything and therefore can't be represented by physical temples.

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. (Acts 17:24-25)



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e) Paul connects this God to humanity by claiming that he created all people for the expressed purpose of coming into a relationship with them. Paul supports this claim by reference to two stoic philosophers.

From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' (Acts 17:26-28)



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f) Paul points out that, if these things are true, we shouldn't try to represent God with an idol, and that, while God has been tolerant of this ignorance in the past, that time is over. God expects people to repent (turn around) from their ignorance and has intervened in human history by appointing a man (Jesus) to judge everyone, and has confirmed this by bringing that man back from the dead.

“Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” (Acts 17:29-31)

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g) Notice that Paul draws people from a point of agreement (common ground) through reason (common sense) to revelation (information they don't already know) to a critical point of decision (*do I want to know the God he speaks of?*), but he doesn't flood them with information or quote the Old Testament, as he did to the Jews.

To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. (1 Cor 9:20-23)

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h) Those who are open to this presentation were able to seek additional information. In the end, the gospel makes sense. Some of those became converts.

When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” At that, Paul left the Council. Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others. (Acts 17:32-34)



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6. Paul then heads to Corinth, the most prominent, affluent city (the capital) in the Roman province of Achaia (i.e., Greece).



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Corinth

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Korinthos

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- a) He meets and stays with Priscilla and Aquila, fellow Jewish Christians who become co-workers in ministry.

After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. (Acts 18:1-3)



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The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house. (1 Cor 16:19)

Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. (Rom 16:3-4)



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b) As usual, Paul began his work in the synagogue and the converts (Jewish and Godfearing Gentiles) formed the nucleus of the church in Corinth.

When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, **he shook out his clothes in protest** and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

(Acts 18:4-8)

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And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so. (2 Cor 11:9)

I also **shook out the folds of my robe** and said, “In this way may God shake out of their house and possessions anyone who does not keep this promise. So may such a person be shaken out and emptied!” (Neh 5:13)



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c) Despite opposition, the Lord confirms to Paul that he should remain in the city. In other words, God informs Paul's strategy for the gospel when the situation itself is difficult to read. In this case, the opposition doesn't mean he should keep moving, and God makes sure he knows he is supposed to stay put. In the case of the gospel, for those who follow the pattern of God's heart, God controls all precedents and information when wisdom itself isn't a sufficient guide.

One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city." So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

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While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews of Corinth made a united attack on Paul and brought him to the place of judgment. “This man,” they charged, “is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law.”

Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to them, “If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law—settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things.” So he drove them off. Then the crowd there turned on Sosthenes the synagogue leader and beat him in front of the proconsul; and Gallio showed no concern whatever. (Acts 18:9-17)



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d) When Paul eventually leaves, he prepares himself for (what appears to be) a Nazirite vow and then heads to Ephesus with Priscilla and Aquila, where he starts another church.

Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchreae because of a vow he had taken. They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. But as he left, he promised, "I will come back if it is God's will." Then he set sail from Ephesus. When he landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch. (Acts 18:18-22)

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Nazirite Vows

The Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of dedication to the Lord as a Nazirite, they must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or other fermented drink. They must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. As long as they remain under their Nazirite vow, they must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins.

“During the entire period of their Nazirite vow, no razor may be used on their head. They must be holy until the period of their dedication to the Lord is over; they must let their hair grow long.’” (Num 6:1-5)

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e) Paul then heads out from Antioch on (what will be) the third missionary journey, traveling through Galatia and strengthening the churches formed on the first missionary journey. His path will take him back to Ephesus. But we are given a glimpse of something going on in Ephesus while this is occurring—the appearance of a man named Apollos.

After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John.

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He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah. (Acts 18:23-28)



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You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings? (1 Cor 3:3-4)

So then, no more boasting about human leaders! All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God. (1 Cor 3:21-23)



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How shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. (Heb 2:3)

