



Walking with the Spirit through the Book of Acts

Pastor Michael Cranford

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Schedule

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|----------|----------------------|---------|------------------|
| 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 Third Missionary Journey

I. The primary scene for the work of the Spirit in Paul's third missionary journey is Ephesus. As Paul initially arrives, he meets some "disciples" who did not receive the Holy Spirit when they believed (Acts 19:1-7). This episode reminds us that the coming of the Spirit on a person's life is different than salvation. But it does not tell us that you can be saved and not receive the Spirit. These people clearly had a deficiency in their belief. They receive the Spirit when they act on what they are told. Nothing in this passage implies that there is an extended time-gap in receiving the Spirit or that you can have saving faith and not receive the Spirit.

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

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They answered, “No, **we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.**”

So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?”

“John’s baptism,” they replied.

Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people **to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.**” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.

(Acts 19:1-7)

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)

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Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? (1 Cor 12:30)

I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified. (1 Cor 14:5)



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Ephesus



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2. Ephesus was the greatest city in Asia Minor and one of the greatest cities in the Roman Empire. Paul had already briefly visited, formed a church, and left Priscilla and Aquila behind to tend it (Acts 18:19). On his return, Paul picks up precisely where he left off.



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3. The ministry in Ephesus typifies two battles in the ministry of the gospel. The first is the battle in the material realm (cultural pushback / flesh and blood adversaries). This is the Satan's first line of attack. (Acts 19:8-10)

Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. (Acts 19:8-10)



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a) Pushback happens when you are living for Christ in a fallen world.

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)



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b) When you speak the truth, expect people to put up walls and harden their hearts.

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Cor 4:4)



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c) It sometimes looks like people and circumstances are aligned against you, but behind it are the forces of darkness. (Eph 6:10-12).

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 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 6:10-12)



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4. The second battle-front is in the spiritual realm (exposed demonic powers). It's the same enemy as before but you are no longer dealing with cultural forces. (Acts 19:11-20)

a) The Spirit of God reveals his power to expose the counterfeit. (Acts 19:11-12).

God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them. (Acts 19:11-12)



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And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power. (1 Cor 2:1-5)



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b) When the counterfeit is exposed, the weakness of the demonic is revealed. (Acts 19:13-16)

Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.” Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. (Acts 19:13-16)



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c) When the weakness of the demonic is revealed, people turn to the true source of power and leave their sin behind. (Acts 19:17-20)

When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power. (Acts 19:17-20; NIV)



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5. Satan does not stop. The Spirit can use opposition in our lives as a way to invoke wisdom as a leading—to continue moving ahead. When there is a public disturbance in Ephesus, Paul heads in the direction he was planning to go—toward Macedonia (Philippi and Thessalonica). Rome doesn't find Christians guilty of creating problems. (Acts 19:21-41)

After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. “After I have been there,” he said, “I must visit Rome also.” He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.



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About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: “You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.” (Acts 19:21-27)



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When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into the theater together. Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front, and they shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

(Acts 19:28-34)

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The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: “Fellow Ephesians, doesn’t all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of what happened today. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it.” After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly. (Acts 19:35-41)

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6. When the missionary group passes through Philippi, the narrative again turns to the first person, indicating that Luke is (again) traveling with Paul. (The last time Luke says “we” is in Acts 16:12-13, when they arrive in Philippi. So Luke apparently stayed in Philippi over the last few years.)

When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia. He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, **where he stayed three months**. Because some Jews had plotted against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia. He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. These men went on ahead and waited for **us** at Troas. But **we** sailed from Philippi after the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where **we** stayed seven days. (Acts 20:1-6)

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²³ But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to visit you, ²⁴ I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. ²⁵ Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord's people there. ²⁶ For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord's people in Jerusalem. ²⁷ They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. ²⁸ So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this contribution, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. ²⁹ I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ. (Romans 15:23-29)

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7. In Troas, Paul is speaking and a young man named Eutychus falls to his death. He then returns to life in Paul's arms (Acts 20:7-12). Luke is providing a description of what he saw, and the implication is that God brought him back from the dead. It's a reminder to us that Luke is writing as a rational eyewitness who is recording what he sees.

On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!" Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted. (Acts 20:7-12)

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We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. (Acts 20:13)



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When he met us at **Assos**,
we took him aboard and
went on to
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The Third Missionary Journey

When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to **Mitylene**. (Acts 20:14)



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The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios. The day after that we crossed over to **Samos**, and on the following day arrived at Miletus. (Acts 20:15)



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8. Paul is intent on returning to Jerusalem, but he stops at **Miletus** to have a final meeting with the elders of the Ephesian church.



The Third Missionary Journey

8. Paul is intent on returning to Jerusalem, but he stops at Miletus to have a final meeting with the elders of the Ephesian church. He says goodbye to them, letting them know that hardships are ahead for him. He commissions and warns them and then commits them to God. It's a reminder that we are more than co-workers in the gospel; we are family. Christianity transcends ethnicity, background, and geography, and builds bonds of love that last forever. If you look at it that way, the Spirit can use you powerfully in people's lives. (Acts 20:13-35)



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From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived, he said to them: “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

“And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.

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“Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.



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“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”

When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship. (Acts 20:13-35)