



Walking with the Spirit through the Book of Acts

Pastor Michael Cranford

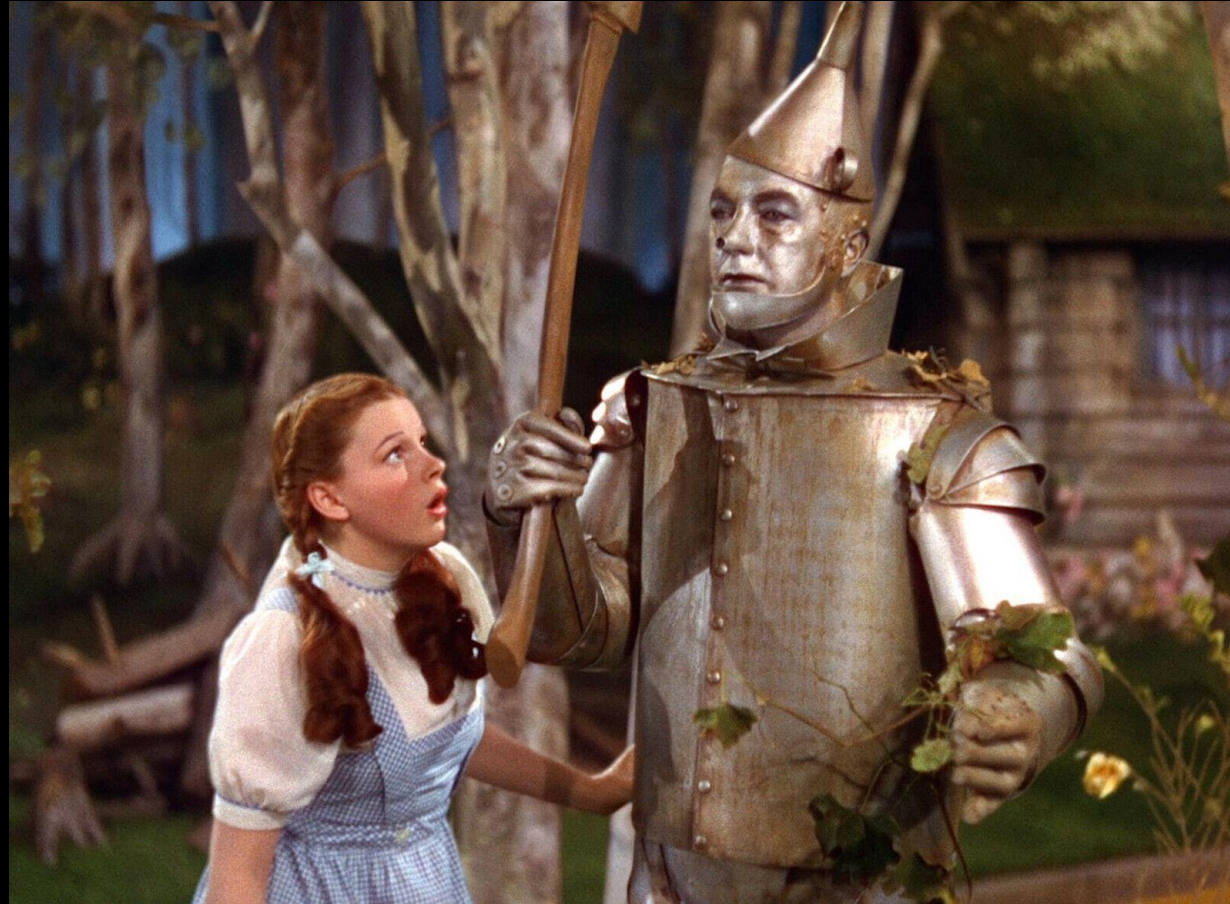
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Schedule

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



Acts & The Big Picture in God's Plan



Acts & The Big Picture in God's Plan

I. The Spirit reveals and confirms God's sovereignty in the unfolding of his plan and purpose. (Acts 4:23-31)

a) God is the architect of the universe and confirms that circumstances are not coincidental by the words of his prophets.

When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

"Why do the nations rage

and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth rise up

and the rulers band together
against the Lord

and against his anointed one.' (Acts 4:24-26)

Acts & The Big Picture in God's Plan

b) God's plan weaves together the evil intents of others to his great purpose. Circumstances are beyond Satan's ability to foresee.

Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. (Acts 4:27-28)



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c) Those who rest in God's sovereignty can persevere in the face of hardship and expect his power.

“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” (Acts 4:29-30)



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d) The Spirit confirms and fills the men and women who follow him and adopt his mindset.

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. (Acts 4:31)



Acts & The Big Picture in God's Plan

2. Those who are led by the Spirit bond as a community. A community treats one another as equally valuable in times of need. (Acts 4:32-35)

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. (Acts 4:32-35)



A Case Study in Fraud: Ananias and Sapphira

I. The situation is framed by the selfless generosity of Barnabas.

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet. (Acts 4:36-37)



A Case Study in Fraud: Ananias and Sapphira

2. The actual sin was not a partial donation but the lie that it was a complete donation, like Barabas's. Behind the lie was a representation that their hearts were in alignment with the Spirit, but this was fraud.

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A Case Study in Fraud: Ananias and Sapphira

3. The Spirit acted to expose the fraud and used Peter as an agent to make the situation clear, in the same way that his power had aligned with Peter's message throughout the first four chapters of Acts. The word and the work of the Spirit are necessarily connected.

Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God." (Acts 5:3-4)

A Case Study in Fraud: Ananias and Sapphira

4. The Spirit is revealed as a person with a singular mindset and perfect in holiness, not a generalized power or emotional sentiment. The source of power in Acts is God himself, not a spiritual force.

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5. The Spirit is capable of authenticating his people, his message, and his purposes. Our purpose is not authentication but alignment.

When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. (Acts 5:5)

