

Acts

The story of the church

To the Nations

All the treasure in the world falls infinitely short of purchasing the power of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:18–19 ... *"Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.""*

The Holy Spirit puts us right where we are to do the work of God.

Acts 9:15–16 ... *"But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.""*

The Holy Spirit leads us through times of turmoil and times of peace.

Acts 9:31 ... *"So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied."*

Through Jesus the barrier of fellowship between Jews and gentiles was removed.

Acts 10:14–15 ... "But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common.""

Acts 10:28 ... "And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean."

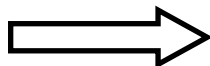
The Gospel brings forgiveness to everyone who believes in Jesus.

Acts 10:39–43 ... "And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.""

Commentary on Acts 8:14-17

In Acts 8:14-17 we observe an interesting phenomenon only mentioned here in the scriptures. When the people of Samaria heard the Gospel, many believed and were baptized in water, but the Holy Spirit had not fallen on any of them. When Peter and John come, they pray for the new believers, lay their hands on them and then the believers receive the Holy Spirit. What are we to make of this? Consider the following verses:

- **John 20:22, Acts 4:8** - The Holy Spirit sometimes comes upon people in a special way to fulfill the purposes of God.
- **Acts 2:38-39** - In Peter's sermon on Pentecost He ties repentance, belief in Jesus, and Baptism with receiving the Holy Spirit.
- **Acts 10:44-48** - Cornelius and other gentiles receive the Holy Spirit and then are Baptized.
- **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** - The body of each Christian is a temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells.
- **Ephesians 1:13** - We are sealed with the Holy Spirit when we receive the word of God and believe in Jesus.
- **Titus 3:5** - Our salvation comes from the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.



The Holy Spirit is always intimately at work when a person comes to saving faith in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit renews, regenerates, seals and indwells each and every believer. The Holy Spirit also fills or comes upon people in a special way to fulfill specific work God has called them to.

“The current passage is the most difficult case of them all. Why was the receipt of the Spirit so disconnected from the Samaritans’ baptism? Luke indicated that such a separation was not normal by the little word “simply” in v. 16. They had “simply been baptized”—one would usually have expected them to have received the Spirit as well. Many interpreters point to the significance of the experience being one of an outward demonstration of the Spirit in some visible sign that Simon could “see” (v. 18). Therefore this does not rule out the Spirit’s having worked inwardly in them at the point of their initial conviction and commitment.” (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 218.)

Luke seems to emphasize the importance of church unity here. This was not some new movement, some cultic subset of mainline Christianity. Believers in Samaria linked immediately with believers in Jerusalem to protect the unity of the church, an issue especially crucial when Jerusalem and Samaria were involved.” (Kenneth O. Gangel, *Acts*, vol. 5, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 123.)