

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 163 – June 12th – Acts 8:14-40

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Acts

Bruce, FF, *The Acts of the Apostles*, London, 2nd ed. 1952

Polhill, John B, *Acts: The New American Commentary*, Nashville, 1992

Stott, John R W, *The Message of Acts*, IVP (The Bible Speaks Today), Leicester, 1990

Verse 14

Ἀκούσαντες δὲ οἱ ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἀπόστολοι
ὅτι δέδεκται ἡ Σαμάρεια τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ,
ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτοὺς Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην,
δέδεκται Verb, perf midd/pass dep indic, 3 s
διδωμι receive

"Along with his brother James he [John] had once wished to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans (Lk 9:54)." Bruce.

Verse 15

οἵτινες καταβάντες προσηύξαντο περὶ αὐτῶν
ὅπως λάβωσιν πνεῦμα ἅγιον·

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἥτις, ὁ τι
who, which
προσηύξαντο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 pl
προσευχομαι pray
ὅπως (or ὅπως ἄν) that, in order that
λάβωσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl λαμβανω

"Although these Samaritan believers had received Christian baptism, they did not receive the Spirit until the laying on of the apostles' hands. The receiving of the Holy Spirit in Acts is connected with the manifestation of some spiritual gift. The order of events varied; the Gentiles in 10:44 ff. were baptised because their glossolalia showed that they had already received the Spirit; the disciples at Ephesus in 19:5f. received Him thus as the immediate sequel to Christian baptism (cf. 2:38) and the imposition of the apostolic hands." Bruce.

Several commentators refer to this as a 'Samaritan Pentecost' and compare the incident with the way the Spirit fell on Cornelius and his fellow Gentiles in 10:44. "It is a major stage of salvation history. The Spirit as it were indicated in a visible manifestation the divine approval of the new missionary step beyond Judaism... Through Peter and John's participation, the Samaritan mission was given the stamp of approval of the mother church in Jerusalem." Polhill.

John Stott devotes a number of pages in his book, *The Message of Acts* (IVP, *The Bible Speaks Today* series) to a discussion of this two-stage experience of the Samaritan converts. Unlike Catholic and Pentecostal interpretations he argues that this pattern is not (and was not considered) normative for Christian conversion. It was an extraordinary event which was designed to demonstrate the unity of Samaritans with Jews as part of one body in Christ. "There was one body because there was one Spirit." This one body was united under the oversight and teaching of the apostles. But there is no evidence that the apostles continued to dash around the Mediterranean endorsing evangelistic outreach!

Verse 16

οὐδέπω γὰρ ἦν ἐπ' οὐδενὶ αὐτῶν ἐπιπετωκός,
μόνον δὲ βεβαπτισμένοι ὑπῆρχον εἰς τὸ ὄνομα
τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ.

οὐδέπω adv not yet
ἐπιπετωκός Verb, perf act ptc, m nom s
ἐπιπιτω fall upon, come upon
βεβαπτισμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
βαπτίζω
ὑπῆρχον Verb, imperf act indic, 1 s & 3 pl
ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἶμι)

βεβαπτισμενοι ὑπῆρχον 'they had already been baptised'

"The expression, εἰς τὸ ὄνομα is common in a commercial context: some property is paid or transferred 'into the name' of someone, i.e., into his account. So the person baptised εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ bears public testimony that he has become Christ's property. These words may well have been used regularly in a formula by the baptizer. Cf. 1 Cor 1:13 ff." Bruce.

In the light of Peter's previous promise that the Spirit would be given to all who repented and were baptised (2:38), Howard Marshall calls the statement that 'the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus', "perhaps the most extraordinary statement in Acts."

Verse 17

τότε ἐπετίθεσαν τὰς χεῖρας ἐπ' αὐτούς, καὶ ἐλάμβανον πνεῦμα ἅγιον.

ἐπιτιθημι place on, place
χειρ, χειρος f hand

A clear indication of acceptance.

Verse 18

ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Σίμων ὅτι διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τῶν ἀποστόλων δίδεται τὸ πνεῦμα προσήνεγκεν αὐτοῖς χρήματα

ἰδὼν Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ὄραω trans
see

ἐπιθεσις, εως f laying on (of hands)
δίδεται Verb, pres pass indic, 3 s δίδωμι

Many MSS add τὸ ἅγιον after τὸ πνεῦμα.

προσήνεγκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s
προσφερω offer, present
χρημα, τος n mostly pl possessions,
wealth, money

Verse 19

λέγων· Δότε κάμοι τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην ἵνα ὡς ἐὰν ἐπιθῶ τὰς χεῖρας λαμβάνῃ πνεῦμα ἅγιον.

δοτε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl δίδωμι
κάμοι abbreviated form of καὶ ἐμοὶ and to
me, also to me

ἐξουσία, ας f authority, power
ἐπιθῶ Verb, aor act subj, 1 s ἐπιτιθημι

"Ever since that day, the attempt to turn the spiritual into the commercial, to traffic in the things of God, and especially to purchase ecclesiastical office, has been termed 'simony'." Stott.

Verse 20

Πέτρος δὲ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν· Τὸ ἀργύριόν σου σὺν σοὶ εἶη εἰς ἀπώλειαν ὅτι τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνόμισας διὰ χρημάτων κτᾶσθαι.

ἀργύριον, ου n silver coin, money, silver
εἶη 3s optative εἶμι

The optative is rare in NT Greek. It is used to express a wish, cf. Lk 1:38; Mk 11:14 etc. "There are thirty eight such proper optatives in the NT, fifteen of which being accounted for by the phrase μη γενοιτο. Of the remaining twenty three, Paul is responsible for fifteen." Bruce.

ἀπώλεια, ας f destruction, utter ruin
δωρεα, ας f gift
νομίζω think, suppose
κταομαι acquire, gain

Verse 21

οὐκ ἔστιν σοὶ μερίς οὐδὲ κληρος ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ, ἡ γὰρ καρδία σου οὐκ ἔστιν εὐθεῖα ἐναντι τοῦ θεοῦ.

μερις, ἰδος f part, portion, share
κληρος, ου m lot, share, part

Compare Dt 12:12 for a similar phrase.

λογος here in the sense of 'matter', 'thing'
εὐθυσ, εια, υ straight; upright

Cf. Ps 128:37 (LXX 127).

ἐναντι prep with gen before, in the
presence of

Verse 22

μετανόησον οὖν ἀπὸ τῆς κακίας σου ταύτης, καὶ δεήθητι τοῦ κυρίου εἰ ἄρα ἀφεθήσεται σοὶ ἡ ἐπίνοια τῆς καρδίας σου·

μετανοεω repent, have a change of heart
κακια, ας evil, wickedness

δεήθητι Verb, aor pass dep imperat, 2 s
δεομαι ask, pray

ἄρα consequently, then

ἀφεθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s ἀφημι
cancel, forgive

ἐπίνοια, ας f intent, purpose

Here alone in the NT. Often has the sense 'evil intent'

Verse 23

εἰς γὰρ χολὴν πικρίας καὶ σύνδεσμον ἀδικίας ὀρῶ σε ὄντα.

χολη, ης f gall (of something bitter)
πικρια, ας f bitterness, bitter feeling

Cf. Dt 39:18 (Heb 12:15); Lam 3:19.

σύνδεσμος, ου m that which binds
together, bond

ἀδικια, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin

Cf. Is 58:6.

ὄραω see, observe, perceive, recognise
ὄντα pres ptc m acc s εἶμι

Verse 24

ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Σίμων εἶπεν· Δεήθητε ὑμεῖς ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ πρὸς τὸν κύριον ὅπως μηδὲν ἐπέλθῃ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ὧν εἰρήκατε.

ἀποκριθεὶς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s

ἀποκρινομαι answer, reply, say

δεήθητε Verb, aor pass dep imperat, 2 pl

δεομαι

ὅπως (or ὅπως ἄν) that, in order that

ἐπέλθῃ aor subj ἐπερχομαι come, come

ὑpon

ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγω

εἰρήκατε Verb, perf act indic, 2 pl λεγω

Stott comments, "Simon's response to Peter's rebuke was not encouraging. He showed no sign of repentance, or even of contrition.

Instead of praying for forgiveness, as Peter urged him to do (22), he felt so incapable of praying, or so distrustful of his own prayers, that he asked Peter to pray for him instead.

What really concerned him was not that he might receive God's pardon, but only that he might escape God's judgment, with which Peter had threatened him."

Verse 25

Οἱ μὲν οὖν διαμαρτυράμενοι καὶ λαλήσαντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου ὑπέστρεφον εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα, πολλὰς τε κόμας τῶν Σαμαριτῶν εὐηγγελίζοντο.

μεν οὖν so then

Indicates the start of a new section.

διαμαρτυράμενοι Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom pl διαμαρτυρομαι declare solemnly and emphatically

ὑποστρεφω return, turn back

Including Philip, cf. v.26.

κωμη, ης f village, small town

Σαμαριτης, ου m Samaritan

εὐαγγελίζω act. and midd proclaim the good news

"Notice the variety of constructions after εὐαγγελίζομαι: it may take the accusative of the people evangelised (as here), the acc of the person proclaimed (ver 35), the acc of the thing proclaimed (ver 4); the person evangelised may also be expressed by the dat (Rom 1:15) or by a prepositional phrase (εἰς ὑμας 1 Pet 1:25); the substance of the message may also be expressed by a prepositional phrase (ver 12)." Bruce.

"The reference to the apostles evangelising the Samaritan villages is significant. Not only did they endorse the Samaritan mission, but they also enthusiastically participated in it. A new stage in the Christian mission had been reached – the witness to Samaria. Begun by the Hellenist Philip, it was embraced by the entire church." Polhill.

Verse 26

Ἄγγελος δὲ κυρίου ἐλάλησεν πρὸς Φίλιππον λέγων· Ἀνάστηθι καὶ πορεύου κατὰ μεσημβρίαν ἐπὶ τὴν ὁδὸν τὴν καταβαίνουσαν ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλὴμ εἰς Γάζαν· αὕτη ἐστὶν ἔρημος.

Cf. v.29 which states that the Spirit directed Philip.

ἀνάστηθι Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s ἀνιστημι rise, stand up

μεσημβρια, ας f noon, midday, south

The sense here is probably 'southwards'

καταβαίνουσαν Verb, pres act ptc, f acc s

καταβαινω come or go down

ἐρημος, ου f deserted place, desert

The old city of Gaza was destroyed in 93 BC and a new city built in 57 BC a few miles south of the old city, on the coast. The old city, after its destruction was called Desert Gaza to distinguish it from the new.

Verse 27

καὶ ἀναστὰς ἐπορεύθη, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ Αἰθίοψ εὐνοῦχος δυνάστης Κανδάκης βασιλίσσης Αἰθιοπῶν, ὃς ἦν ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς γάζης αὐτῆς, ὃς ἐληλύθει προσκυνήσων εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ,

Αἰθιοψ, οπος m Ethiopian

Cf. Ps 68:38; Zeph 3:10. Stott comments, "The 'Ethiopia' of those days corresponded to what we call 'the Upper Nile', reaching approximately from Aswan to Khartoum."

εὐνοῦχος, ου m eunuch

"Eunuchs were commonly employed as court officials in Oriental lands until within recent times. They had at an earlier time been excluded from the religious privileges of Israel (Dt 23:1), but the removal of this ban is announced in Isa 56:3ff." Bruce.

δυναστης, ου m ruler, king

βασιλισσα, ης f queen

Κανδακης βασιλίσσης Candace was a hereditary title of the Ethiopian queens who reigned in Meroe, one of the two chief cities of ancient Ethiopia or Cush (different from modern Ethiopia).

γάζα, ης f treasury

A Persian word by origin.

ἐηλύθει Verb, pluperf act indic, 3 s ἐρχομαι
προσκυνω worship

The future participle, used to express purpose, is rare in the NT outside of Luke-Acts.

"The Ethiopian, if not a proselyte, was perhaps one of the class of 'God-fearers' or 'devout persons', loosely attached to Judaism (see on 2:10; 10:2)." Bruce.

Verse 28

ἦν τε ὑποστρέφων καὶ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ ἄρματος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεγίνωσκεν τὸν προφήτην Ἡσαΐαν.

καθημαι sit, sit down, live
ἄρμα, τος n chariot, carriage

Perhaps a covered wagon.

ἀναγινωσκω read, read in public worship

He would have been reading aloud.

Verse 29

εἶπεν δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα τῷ Φιλίππῳ· Πρόσελθε καὶ κολλήθητι τῷ ἄρματι τούτῳ.

For direct guidance by the Spirit, cf. 10:19; 13:2; 16:6f.; 19:1.

προσερχομαι come or go to, approach
κολλήθητι Verb, aor pass dep imperat, 2 s
κολλασμαι unite oneself with

Howard Marshall comments, "The way in which the story is told bears some structural resemblances to another story in which a Stranger joined two travellers and opened the Scriptures to them, took part in a sacramental act, and then disappeared from view (Lk. 24:13-35)."

Verse 30

προσδραμῶν δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος ἤκουσεν αὐτοῦ ἀναγινώσκοντος Ἡσαΐαν τὸν προφήτην καὶ εἶπεν· Ἄρα γε γινώσκεις ἃ ἀναγινώσκεις;

προσδραμων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s
προστρεχω run up to
προφητης, ου m prophet
ἄρα Interrogative particle expecting a negative response

ἄρα is to be distinguished from ἄρα. ἄρα γε is a literary construction.

γε enclitic particle adding emphasis to the word with which it is associated
γινωσκω here meaning understand

Verse 31

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· Πῶς γὰρ ἂν δυναίμην εἰάν μή τις ὀδηγήσει με; παρεκάλεσέν τε τὸν Φίλιππον ἀναβάντα καθίσει σὺν αὐτῷ.

δυναίμην Verb, pres midd/pass dep opt, 1 s
δυναμαι

ὀδηγεω lead, guide

"His response enunciates a basic principle that runs through Luke-Acts concerning the interpretation of Old Testament prophetic texts – the need for a Christian interpreter." Polhill.

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

ἀναβάντα Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s

ἀναβαινω come up

καθίζω intrans sit down, sit

Verse 32

ἡ δὲ περιοχὴ τῆς γραφῆς ἣν ἀνεγίνωσκεν ἦν αὕτη· Ὡς πρόβατον ἐπὶ σφαγὴν ἤχθη, καὶ ὡς ἄμνος ἐναντίον τοῦ κείραντος αὐτὸν ἄφωνος, οὕτως οὐκ ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ.

περιοχη, ης f passage of Scripture

Isaiah 53:7,8.

προβατον, ου n sheep

σφαγη, ης f slaughter

ἤχθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ἄγω

ἄμνος, ου m lamb

"Only in three other places in NT (Jn 1:29, 36; 1 Peter 1:19), each time with the sacrificial sense so common in OT." Bruce.

ἐναντιον before

κείραντος Verb, pres act ptc, m gen s κειρω
shear (sheep)

ἄφωνος, ον dumb, silent, without meaning

ἀνοίγω open

στομα, τος n mouth

Verse 33

ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει ἡ κρίσις αὐτοῦ ἦρθη· τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγῆσεται; ὅτι αἶρεται ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἡ ζωὴ αὐτοῦ.

ταπεινωσις, εως f humiliation

κρισις, εως f judgement, act of judgement

ἦρθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s αἶρω take,
take away

ἡ κρίσις αὐτοῦ ἦρθη 'he was deprived of justice'

γενεα, ας f generation

διηγεομαι tell, relate

Verse 34

ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ εὐνοῦχος τῷ Φιλίππῳ εἶπεν· Δέομαί σου, περὶ τίνος ὁ προφήτης λέγει τοῦτο; περὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἢ περὶ ἐτέρου τίνος;

ἀποκριθεὶς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s

ἀποκρινομαι answer, reply, say

δεομαι ask, beg

δεομαι σου 'Please', a polite way of introducing a request, cf. 21:39; Lk 8:38; Gal 4:12.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

Verse 35

ἀνοίξας δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τῆς γραφῆς ταύτης εὐηγγελίσαστο αὐτῷ τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

ἀνοίξας aor ptc ἀνοίγω open
στόμα, τος n mouth
ἀρξάμενος Verb, aor midd ptc, m nom s
ἀρχω midd begin

Stott comments, "Now there is no evidence that anyone in first-century Judaism was expecting a suffering rather than a triumphant Messiah. No, it was Jesus who applied Isaiah 53 to himself, and understood his death in the light of it [e.g. Mk 10:45; 14:24ff.; Lk 22:37]. It was, therefore, from him that the early Christians learned to read Isaiah 53 in this way."

Verse 36

ὡς δὲ ἐπορεύοντο κατὰ τὴν ὁδόν, ἦλθον ἐπὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ φησιν ὁ εὐνοῦχος· Ἴδου ὕδωρ, τί κωλύει με βαπτισθῆναι;

ὁδος, ου f way, road, journey
ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water
φησιν Verb, pres indic, 3 s φημι say
κωλυω hinder, prevent, forbid

This verb, with the consequent narrative, indicates that the Gospel destroys all barriers – here a black Gentile eunuch is received into full membership of the people of God.

βαπτισθῆναι aor pass infin βαπτίζω

Maybe Philip had concluded his exposition with words similar to those used by Peter in his Pentecost sermon, cf. 2:38. Stott comments, "So well prepared by the Holy Spirit was this Ethiopian's heart that it seems he believed immediately, and went on to ask for baptism."

Verse 37

This verse – εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος Εἰ πιστενεὶς ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας, ἐξεστίν. ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ Πιστεῦω τον υἱον του θεου εἶναι τον Ἰησοῦν Χριστον – is omitted from most modern editions of the New Testament since textual evidence it is late and the wording varied. It would appear to be an addition to the original text. Bruce says "Its insertion seems due to a feeling that Philip could not have baptised the Ethiopian without so much as a confession of faith." The verse provides valuable insight into early Christian baptismal confessional practice in terms of question and response.

Verse 38

καὶ ἐκέλευσεν στήναι τὸ ἄρμα, καὶ κατέβησαν ἀμφότεροι εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ ὃ τε Φίλιππος καὶ ὁ εὐνοῦχος, καὶ ἐβάπτισεν αὐτόν.

κέλευω order, command
στήναι 2 aor infin ἰστημι stand, stop
ἄρμα, τος n see v.28.
ἀμφότεροι, αι, α both, all

ἀμφότεροι εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ not without significance concerning the manner of baptism in the New Testament. Cf. Mk 1:9f.

Verse 39

ὅτε δὲ ἀνέβησαν ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος, πνεῦμα κυρίου ἤρπασεν τὸν Φίλιππον, καὶ οὐκ εἶδεν αὐτόν· οὐκέτι ὁ εὐνοῦχος, ἐπορεύετο γὰρ τὴν ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ χαίρων.

ὅτε conj when, at which time
ἤρπασεν aor ἄρπαζω take away, carry off
οὐκέτι adv no longer, no more

Cf. 1 Kings 18:12; 2 Kings 2:16.

χαίρω rejoice, be glad

He went on his way rejoicing, "without the evangelist but with the evangel, without human aid but with the divine Spirit." Stott.

Verse 40

Φίλιππος δὲ εὐρέθη εἰς Ἀζωτον, καὶ διερχόμενος εὐηγγελίζετο τὰς πόλεις πάσας ἕως τοῦ ἐλθεῖν αὐτόν εἰς Καισάρειαν.

εὐρέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s εὕρισκω

Ἀζωτον the OT Ashdod, another of the five Philistine cities; 20 miles north of Gaza. Bruce comments, "It may have been due to his activity that disciples were found at Lydda and Joppa in 9:32ff, although some of the dispersed believers from Jerusalem may have found their way there already."

διερχομαι pass through, go over, go through, go

ἐλθεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐρχομαι

"Caesarea (mod. Kaisariyeh) was built by Herod the Great on the site of Straton's Tower, between Joppa and Dora, and completed c. 13 B.C. It was intended to be the chief Mediterranean port of Palestine, and from the beginning was a thoroughly Gentile city. It was named Caesarea Sebaste, after Augustus. It became the official residence of the procurators of Judea. During the Jewish War it was the headquarters of Vespasian (who was proclaimed Emperor there in A.D. 69) and of Titus; and after the fall of Jerusalem it was recognised beyond dispute as the capital of Palestine, with a new status as a Roman colony." Bruce.

Philip appears to have settled in Caesarea, cf. 21:8.