

Acts 8:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

Analysis

For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. Philip's ministry in Samaria demonstrates gospel power through miraculous signs—exorcisms and physical healings authenticating the message of Christ.

The phrase unclean spirits acknowledges demonic reality—fallen angels enslaving humans. Their crying with loud voice indicates violent resistance to divine authority. Reformed theology recognizes spiritual warfare as real though subordinate to God's sovereignty. Demons' expulsion demonstrates Christ's triumph over Satan's kingdom (Colossians 2:15).

The healings—palsies and lameness—address both sudden and chronic afflictions. These miracles serve multiple purposes: relieving genuine suffering, demonstrating compassion, and authenticating Philip's apostolic message. Signs accompany but don't replace proclamation; they verify the messenger's divine commission.

This outpouring in Samaria fulfills Jesus' promise in Acts 1:8—witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. God's kingdom advances not merely through human persuasion but Spirit-empowered demonstration of Christ's victory over sin, Satan, sickness, and death.

Historical Context

Philip's Samaritan mission (Acts 8:4-25) follows Stephen's martyrdom and persecution-driven dispersion. Samaritans, despised by Jews due to mixed ancestry and heterodox worship (John 4:9), now receive the gospel—a radical development in early Christianity's expansion.

Ancient exorcisms existed in pagan and Jewish contexts, but Christian exorcisms carried distinctive authority—power in Jesus' name, not magical incantations. The visible miracles verified the invisible spiritual reality of salvation. Around 35-37 CE, this ministry established Christianity's movement beyond ethnic Judaism toward universal scope.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do miracles serve to authenticate the gospel message without replacing Word-centered ministry?
2. What does deliverance from unclean spirits teach about the comprehensive nature of salvation?
3. In what ways does physical healing point to deeper spiritual healing through Christ?
4. How should Christians today understand spiritual warfare in light of Christ's decisive victory?
5. What does the gospel's reception among despised Samaritans teach about God's inclusive grace?

Interlinear Text

πολλοὶ	γὰρ	τῶν	ἐχόντων	πνεύματα	ἀκάθαρτα
many	For	^{G3588}	that were possessed	spirits	unclean
G4183	G1063		G2192	G4151	G169
βοῶντα	μεγάλη	φωνῇ	ἐξήρχετο·	πολλοὶ	δὲ
crying	with loud	voice	came out	many	with them and
G994	G3173	G5456	G1831	G4183	G1161
παραλελυμένοι	καὶ	χωλοὶ	ἐθεραπεύθησαν·		
taken with palsies	and	that were lame	were healed		
G3886	G2532	G5560	G2323		

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:1 (Spirit): And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

Acts 5:16 (Spirit): There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

Hebrews 2:4 (Spirit): God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?