



For the week of May 29

Monday, May 30 — Acts 17



Chapter Summary: Paul preaches in Thessalonica for three weeks before some Jews form a mob and turn violent. Paul, Silas, and Timothy leave and go to Berea and preach but the Jews follow them and make more trouble. Paul goes alone to Athens and preaches to the philosophers on the Areopagus. Some believe him while others mocked him. Paul has some converts in Athens.

Devotional: When Paul went to Athens he found many idols. He spoke to the philosophers about how the Living God was different from all their gods. The Athenians had an altar to “the Unknown God” in case they had missed one of the gods. Paul used this as his opportunity to tell them about the God they had missed.

Often we have opportunities around us to talk about Jesus. Paul used his circumstances to bring up a discussion about the Lord. How can we be ready to do the same thing when an opportunity presents itself to us?

Questions for more thought/discussion: Luke tells us that everyone in Athens was completely consumed with telling or hearing something new. They weren't worried about truth or acting on what they believed, they just wanted to hear something they'd never heard before. As soon as they heard it, they wanted to tell others. How might that describe our culture today? Could the church be guilty of the same problem? How is Christianity uniquely suited to satisfy our desire to learn new things? What can you learn about God?

Tuesday, May 31 — Acts 18



Chapter Summary: Paul leaves Athens and goes to Corinth. He makes tents with Priscilla and Aquila to support himself. Paul meets with more resistance from the Jews and when they blaspheme, Paul vows to go to the Gentiles. The Jews accuse him legally, but the case is thrown out. Paul leaves and is headed for Jerusalem but stops to encourage the brethren along the way. In Ephesus, Priscilla and Aquila teach Apollos.

Devotional: Apollos knew the Scriptures well but he didn't know about baptism. Aquila and Priscilla took him aside privately and taught him. What does this show us about how to treat others who are sincere in their faith but don't know the whole truth? How should we treat others who teach the plan of salvation incorrectly?

Questions for more thought/discussion: Apollos taught accurately about Jesus from the Scriptures. Priscilla and Aquila found common ground with him before teaching him about Christ's baptism. What does this simple act teach us about the importance the early church placed on teaching about baptism correctly?

Wednesday, June 1 — Acts 19



Chapter Summary: Paul travels to Ephesus and finds some believers who only knew about the baptism practiced by John the Baptist. He teaches them and baptizes them. Paul stays and continues to teach in Ephesus and the Lord does many miracles through Paul. A silversmith stirs up great trouble against Paul in Ephesus but the city clerk calms them before they become a mob.

Devotional: Demetrius the silversmith was concerned about the growth of the church in Ephesus because it was cutting into his business. He made idols of the goddess Diana for a living. He decides to oppose the gospel for financial reasons.

It's difficult to choose to obey the truth when it will cost us something, especially if it costs us a lot. How do you have to choose between God and money in your life? How can we keep our "stuff" from influencing our faith?

Questions for more thought/discussion: Demetrius created a small statue of an idol for people to worship. Why did idols have such an appeal to people? An idol was a god you could carry around in your pocket and pull out when you needed him or her. How are people prone to treat the living God that way today? How did Paul's powerful miracles serve to make people leave their idols to worship the true God? How does His power lead people to choose Him today?



Thursday, June 2 — Acts 20

Chapter Summary: Paul hurries to try and be in Jerusalem for the Day of Pentecost. He travels through Macedonia and Greece and stops at Troas. Here he stays one week and meets with the church. While Paul is preaching until midnight, Eutychus falls asleep and falls out a window. Paul restores him. At Miletus he calls for the elders from Ephesus to meet with him and he encourages them and warns them about what will happen to him in Jerusalem. They pray together.

Devotional: Paul tells the elders from Ephesus that he has preached the whole counsel of God to them. He explains that the church is the Lord's but that they are shepherds in it. He encourages them to love the church and lead it well. They are to protect it from harm, even if the problems come from within the church. Finally, he encourages them to be generous givers. What advice would you give leaders in God's church today? What is the hardest part about the work of an elder? In other letters Paul encourages the church to work hard to honor our elders and be good sheep. How can we understand and appreciate the work an elder has to do? How can we make their job easier and be a blessing to our elders?

Questions for more thought/discussion: Paul describes the church as purchased with the blood of Christ. What is the church and how did Christ purchase it with His blood? What does it mean that the church belongs to Christ? Why is that an important point for Paul to make to elders?

What kind of false teaching does Paul warn the elders to guard against? How does that specific type of false doctrine show up even today? How can elders stand for the truth and against error?

Friday, June 3 — Acts 21



Chapter Summary: Paul continues to travel toward Jerusalem. He visits with Philip along the way. Agabus the prophet warns him about the bad things that will happen to him in Jerusalem, but Paul is resolute to go. In Jerusalem, Paul reports to the elders of the church all that God has done among the Gentiles. Paul is mobbed in the temple and taken into protective custody by the Romans but is permitted to speak to the people.

Devotional: When Paul recounted to the James and the elders all that God had done among the Gentiles, they glorified God. What has God done for us? How can we glorify God for the good things He has done in the church today? How can stories about the growth of the church and the work of missionaries around the world encourage us? How can we tell others about what God has done in our lives so that He can be glorified more?

Questions for more thought/discussion: Do you think Agabus was trying to discourage Paul from going to Jerusalem by warning him about the bad things that would happen? How did Paul's faith allow him to handle the situation?

Even though Paul is arrested, he continues to spread the gospel. Do we know the gospel well enough to teach it in any situation?

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