

2020 New Testament Reading Plan

Living Hope Fellowship
Acts 17-28

Synagogue

Paul's custom, when he traveled to a new city, was to start preaching and teaching about Jesus at the local synagogue when one existed. Jews and Jewish proselytes (converts) were typically given the first opportunity to hear the gospel. See Thessalonica (17:1); Berea (17:10); Athens (17:17); Corinth (18:4); Ephesus (18:19; 19:8).

1. Compare these verses with 22:19. How different Paul's time in the synagogue was! What changed Paul?

Resurrection

Resurrection was the staple doctrine of 1st century preaching during the expansion of the church since Pentecost (see 17:3, 18, 32; 23:6-8; 24:15, 21; 25:19).

2. Why might the resurrection of Jesus been such a difficulty not only for Gentiles but also the Jews (remember that the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection but the Pharisees did, 23:6-8).

3. If the resurrection was such a stumbling block, why would Paul insist on bringing it up everywhere he went?

Female Disciples

Luke is keen on pointing out the various women who believed in Jesus in various cities (Thessalonica, 17:4; Berea, 17:12; Athens, 17:34). Luke had a special interest in the female disciples in his gospel as well which is evidenced, among other places, in the primary role they have at Christ's resurrection. Contrary to notions of the day within other religions, female disciples were invaluable in the spread of Christianity throughout the world.

4. How can we as a church better facilitate and encourage the discipleship and equipping of women?

Geography

Christianity is on the move all over the world in Acts. The gospel knows no boundaries. Keep in mind that the message of Jesus Christ and forgiveness of sins in his name is for all peoples everywhere.

5. What is one practical step you can take in your life to promote unity in the gospel with people you know who are from different cultures (don't just think different countries)?

Gospel & Government

The missionaries are consistently interacting with governing officials throughout Acts.

6. What word would you say best describes the attitude these missionaries have toward their government? How can we learn from their example.

Defense of the Gospel

The latter chapters of Acts focus on years of Paul's life as he's called on to give a defense of himself before various governing officials and his accusers. Paul's defense of himself, however, is really a defense of the gospel which he has been called to proclaim. Paul's attitude is much more focused on taking advantage of the situations God has brought him into as platforms for preaching. And he actually cares about the people in power he speaks with. He desires their conversion and joyfully holds out Christ to them.

7. Which one of these encounters is most convicting to you? The boldness of Paul before his own people? His pleading and persuading of Agrippa? The respect he has toward Festus?

Chapter 22: The Jewish Council & Lysias, the Roman Tribune

Chapter 23: Paul is sent to Governor Felix

Chapter 24: Paul before Felix for 2 years

Chapter 25: Paul before Festus (Felix's replacement), Paul appeals to Caesar.

Chapter 25-26: Paul before King Agrippa & Bernice

Chapter 27: Paul before Roman centurion's and the ship's crew as he sails for Rome

Chapter 28: Paul before the Jews of Rome, awaits trial before Caesar for 2 years