

WEEK # 8

TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH



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—Acts 18:9–10 NIV

WEEK EIGHT

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MEMORY VERSE:

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—Acts 18:9–10 NIV*

We have come to the last week of our Acts Homework for Bible Study, but we are just beginning to study the beauty of this book and the work of the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ and to the ends of the earth. We have studied the witness given in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria and beginning to spread throughout the Roman empire. This week, the gospel will spread to Caesar’s court and to the edge of the known world. Acts 28 ends abruptly with no final conclusion because the gospel of Jesus is still being spread, believer by believer, day by day, and person by person and it will continue to spread until Jesus comes again and makes Himself known to all the world.

Paul’s Third Missionary Journey



DAY 1 – PAUL MAKES HIS WAY BACK TO JERUSALEM

Read Acts Chapters 21 – 22.

Paul is again headed to Jerusalem, and he will encounter severe opposition from the Sanhedrin once again. Verses 1–15 set the scene for the next level of opposition. Describe the journey back to Jerusalem. How is Paul greeted by the different believers along the way?

What is Paul's determination? (Go back and read Acts 20:22–24).

Read Philippians 1–3.

Write out the evidence of this perspective in the epistle to the Philippians. How does Paul view his life, his calling and his mission?

What is God asking of us? How all-inclusive is our relationship with the Lord Jesus? Is this something we do "on the side?" or is the whole mission of our lives to know Jesus and to make Him known until we see Him face to face?

When Paul arrives in Jerusalem, who is there to see him? How do the believers in Jerusalem greet him and how do they try to protect him?

Paul seems to cause a ruckus wherever he goes, so in spite of the believers' attempt to protect him, he is seized by the crowd and the whole city of Jerusalem is in an uproar. Jews and Romans are involved in this spectacle. How does Paul handle the arrest and the confrontation?

This time (and two more times in the last few chapters) Paul has an opportunity to give an explanation of the gospel, and he gives his testimony. Why do you think he changes from a biblical defense or a cultural explanation to a personal testimony of his own experience with Jesus?

At the end of his testimony, how does he tie it in with the story of the God of Israel?

What does he call the people to do? The people listened until a specific moment. What caused them to riot?

This issue continues to cause an uproar with the Jews, and Paul knows the radical nature of what he is saying. He does not try to protect himself.

What happens at the end of chapter 22? Who is Paul standing before now?

DAY 2 – PAUL’S LAST WITNESS TO HIS OWN PEOPLE

Read Chapters 22:30 – 23:35.

Chapter 23 is the last opportunity Paul has to give his witness to his own people, the Jews. Explain the setup for this scene in 22:30. Imagine Paul’s emotions as he faces the Sanhedrin after meeting Jesus on the Damascus Road and three missionary journeys all over the Mediterranean World. Here he is again before those who crucified Jesus. How does he begin his defense?

Ananias is the high priest and has those around him strike him as he struck Jesus. What is Paul’s response? At this moment, Paul (for the first time) seems flustered. And perhaps, the grief of this situation affects his response. However, he is smart and he throws the Sanhedrin into confusion by using what controversial topic?

The Resurrection is the cause of controversy and throws the whole proceeding into chaos. The meeting dissolves into violence and they take Paul away. But that night, Jesus appears to Paul and what does He say to his servant?

The animosity to Paul is so great that there is a plot to kill him. Explain the plot and how Paul is protected from the evil intent of the Jewish leaders.

How is Paul safely taken to Caesarea? He is leaving the Jewish authority and being taken to the Roman governor in Caesarea. What happens to him when he arrives?

DAY 3 – PAUL BEFORE FELIX, FESTUS AND AGRIPPA

Read Chapters 24, 25, and 26.

Paul is now facing the Roman Governor Felix and the Jewish authorities come to Caesarea to accuse him. He is able to give his defense in chapter 23. What is the essence of his defense?

Who does Felix bring in to listen to Paul?

What is Felix's response?

How long does Paul sit in Felix's prison?

In chapter 25, Paul stands trial before Festus who succeeds Felix. Again, the Jewish authorities come to press charges against him.

When asked if he will go back to Jerusalem, Paul insists on going where? What is the response of Festus?

Who is King Agrippa and why is Paul brought before him?

How does Paul present his case to Agrippa and Bernice?

What witness is given to Festus and Agrippa? What is Agrippa's response?

Is it possible to hear the message of Jesus and turn away?

DAY 4 – THE STORM AND THE SHIPWRECK

Read Chapter 27.

Paul's last missionary journey is the trip from Jerusalem to Rome where he is imprisoned before his death. Of course, there are stops along the way — places to give witness to Jesus. Paul uses every opportunity to give his witness....on board the ship, in Crete, in Malta, and finally in Rome.



Paul is headed to Rome. Explain the relationship between Paul and the Centurion and the captain of the boat.

Locate where the storm occurs on the map and where the ship runs aground.

What is Paul's witness and also his confidence? He has no fear because of his security in God's mission and calling in his life.

How does the shipwreck become a means of witness and ministry?

DAY 5 – PAUL'S ARRIVAL IN ROME

Read Chapter 28.

The crew makes it safely to the island of Malta. Two events happen at Malta which make an impression on the local people and on Paul's shipmates. What happens and how is the witness of Jesus given?

How is it that every opportunity becomes a platform for God to make Himself known through Paul's life?

Do you think this is what God intends in every believer's life? In good times and bad, persecution and difficulty — all circumstances are platforms for God to make Jesus known through the lives of believers and disciples. How could this be true in our lives?

Paul arrives in Rome in verse 11. What happens as this chapter comes to a close?

The book seems very anticlimactic — as if the story remains unfinished. Is this intentional on Luke's part? What do you think Luke is trying to communicate by ending the book in this way?

The last people that Paul gives the witness to are the Jews in Rome. Always, seeking to draw God's people into this redemptive story, Paul gives his witness. What scripture from the Old Testament does he refer to, to explain the hardness of heart?

What is Paul's final word?

How long does Paul stay in the Roman prison? Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians are written from prison in Rome. As he waits his opportunity to share Jesus with Nero — the most brutal of all Roman dictators — he writes letters of encouragement and blessing to the small bands of believers in the cities around the Mediterranean Sea.

What is Luke's final word about Paul's witness from prison?

What insights does Jesus give you for your witness?

How are we to share Jesus regardless of our circumstances?

Like Paul, do we consider our lives as a platform through which Jesus can be glorified? Can we say with Paul, *"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"*?

Do we share the fearless determination of people on mission to make the Savior known?

“It is not for you to know the times or the dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:7–8

Where does your missionary journey start?



