

Read the New Testament in a Year

(Daily Devotions with thought-starters and prayer)

© Pastor Richard Haar

July 24th. - Acts 21:20-40.

Reflect: Take heart, Church policy decisions have **always** taken a long time to be fully implemented! These issues (see Acts 15) had supposedly been settled six years earlier! *Prayer: "Lord, you don't give up on your Church. Help me not to either! Amen."*

July 25th. - Acts 22:1-30.

Reflect: The Jewish crowd more-or-less listened to Paul (a well credentialed Jew) until he spoke about salvation for the Gentiles. Then pure prejudice took over! *Prayer: "Lord, forgive my religious blind-spots, and cure me from them! Amen."*

July 26th. - Acts 23:1-15.

Reflect: Wherever Paul went riots seemed to always follow! And yet in the midst of this constant danger and opposition, Paul continued to faithfully witness about Jesus. *Prayer: "Crucified Lord, help me to remain faithful to you no matter what! Amen."*

July 27th. - Acts 23:16-35.

Reflect: What do you think motivated the Roman official to protect Paul (or was he merely glad to hand this "problem" over to Felix?) Where was God in all this? *Prayer: "Heavenly Father, help me to trust in **your** protection and care. Amen."*

July 28th. - Acts 24:1-27.

Reflect: Two years is a long time to wait for Felix to pass judgment. It was left to his replacement to finalise the situation! All this was again an opportunity to witness. *Prayer: "Lord, help me to recognise the 'witness potential' of every situation. Amen."*

July 29th. - Acts 25:1-27.

Reflect: Paul was now caught up in red tape: being passed on from the Commander in Jerusalem, to Governors Felix and Festus (King Agrippa), and finally to the Emperor! *Prayer: "Lord, when life gets real hard, help me to remember your love. Amen."*

July 30th. - Acts 26:1-32.

Reflect: Again and again throughout his many trials, Paul has the privilege of sharing the Gospel with the highest officials in the land. God knew what he was doing! *Prayer: "Lord Jesus, help me to view the world from **your** perspective. Amen."*

July 31st. - Acts 27:1-26.

Reflect: Despite not being able to resist a little, "I told you so", Paul shows great compassion by encouraging his captors that God would spare their lives. *Prayer: "Lord, in times of public danger or fear, let me speak for you. Amen."*

July 1st. - Acts 8:1-25.

Reflect: The Peter and John laid their hands on the Samaritans and they received the Holy Spirit (the Spirit was not just for the Jews!). This was their "Pentecost". *Prayer: "Lord, thank you that your Spirit is available to all. Amen."*

July 2nd. - Acts 8:26-40.

Reflect: When witnessing about Jesus to others, you need to begin where people are at. Verse 35 tells us that this is how Philip went about his witnessing. *Prayer: "Lord Jesus, help me to be sensitive to the opportunities for witnessing about you. Amen."*

July 3rd. - Acts 9:1-22.

Reflect: God chooses the most unlikely people to spread his message to others: Even people like you and me! *Prayer: "Lord, help me to remember that the power for ministry comes from you rather than from me. Amen."*

July 4th. - Acts 9:23-43.

Reflect: Such irony! Saul went to Damascus to kill Christians. He himself had to flee from there because he was in danger of being killed for his Christian faith. *Prayer: "Lord Jesus, help me too to speak fearlessly about you. Amen."*

July 5th. - Acts 10:1-23.

Reflect: What barriers inhibit your witnessing? What would God have to do in order to convince you that the Gospel is for absolutely everyone? *Prayer: "Lord, fill my heart full of compassion for those who don't know you. Amen."*

July 6th. - Acts 10:24-48.

Reflect: In Acts 8 the Spirit was poured out on the Samaritans (half-Jews). Here the Spirit is also given to the Gentiles (non-Jews). That's us! *Prayer: "Lord Jesus, thank you that you are the Saviour of **all** people! Amen."*

July 7th. - Acts 11:1-30.

Reflect: Isn't this typical?! When mission starts to really happen, other people in the Church start to criticise! The proper response is to praise God for his goodness. *Prayer: "Lord, help me to more supportive of those who witness about you. Amen."*

July 8th. - Acts 12:1-25.

Reflect: Have you ever been like Rhoda who had earnestly prayed for Peter's release and then was too surprised to fully appreciate that her prayers were answered? *Prayer: "Lord, help me to be more confident that you will answer my prayers! Amen."*

July 9th. - Acts 13:1-25.

Reflect: The Antioch Christians were willing to give away half of their ministry leaders for mission elsewhere. Do our budgets show the same commitment to mission? *Prayer: "Lord Jesus, give me a real love for mission - at home and abroad. Amen."*

July 10th. - Acts 13:26-52.

Reflect: Paul and Barnabas were expelled from this region and yet were "filled with joy and the Holy Spirit." To do the Lord's work is a joy - whatever the results! *Prayer: "Lord, teach me to faithfully serve you in both good times and bad. Amen."*

July 11th. - Acts 14:1-28.

Reflect: Paul and Barnabas revisited the Congregations they had founded to encourage them to "remain true to the faith". Sunday Worship has the same goal. *Prayer: "Lord Jesus, strengthen my faith and keep me close to you. Amen."*

July 12th. - Acts 15:1-21.

Reflect: The early Church debated whether you had to become a Jew before you could become a Christian. What similar "religious" barriers (expectations) exist today? *Prayer: "Lord, help me to bravely live by your Gospel and not by the Law! Amen."*

July 13th. - Acts 15:22-41.

Reflect: Paul had his doubts about Mark after he had previously let them down (Acts 13:13) But Barnabas [Acts 4:36 tells the meaning of his name!] didn't give up on him. *Prayer: "Lord, help me to encourage and affirm others like Barnabas did. Amen."*

July 14th. - Acts 16:1-18.

Reflect: It is the Lord who opens peoples hearts to believe the message of the Gospel (verse 14). It's also true that commercial interest is often a barrier to faith (verse 19). *Prayer: "Lord Jesus, continue to move me to respond positively to the Gospel. Amen."*

July 15th. - Acts 16:19-40.

Reflect: Believe in Jesus and be saved! This simple message is both the foundation of our Christian lives, and something we come back to again and again. *Prayer: "Saviour, fill my heart with the joy of believing in you. Amen."*

July 16th. - Acts 17:1-15.

Reflect: When witnessing, Paul "reasoned from the Scriptures." This is not imposing our religious opinions on others, this is simply allowing God's Word to speak! *Prayer: "Lord, use me to speak your saving Word to others. Amen."*

July 17th. - Acts 17:16-34.

Reflect: Paul points to the true God who fulfils all our religious longings. If people show interest (even when it's misdirected!) in spiritual things, that's a good place to begin witnessing. *Prayer: "Risen Lord Jesus, help me to tell others about you and your Gospel. Amen."*

July 18th. - Acts 18:1-28.

Reflect: Apollos served Jesus well, even though he wasn't clear about something as basic as Baptism. We all have more to learn about the faith, but God can still use us! *Prayer: "Lord Jesus, help me to keep learning more and more about you! Amen."*

July 19th. - Acts 19:1-20.

Reflect: Jesus' name is not like a magic spell (see verse 15). We need to have a personal (faith) relationship with him, in order to share in his blessings and power. *Prayer: "Saviour, help me to believe in you, honour you and serve you. Amen."*

July 20th. - Acts 19:21-41.

Reflect: Money is the most common (false!) god on earth. The Ephesian businessmen chose profit over faith in Christ. How is this pattern repeated in Australia today? *Prayer: "Lord and Master, free my heart from the love of material wealth. Amen."*

July 21st. - Acts 20:1-16.

Reflect: How long could you have listened to Paul preach before you would have fallen asleep? How well (long) do you manage to concentrate on your Pastor's sermons? *Prayer: "Lord, make me eager to hear your Word - and to live by it! Amen."*

July 22nd. - Acts 20:17-38.

Reflect: Apply Paul's parting blessing in verse 32 to your own life and situation. It is relevant for us all. **God's grace** is what will strengthen us and bring us to eternal life! *Prayer: "Lord Jesus, may I always keep my focus on you and your grace! Amen."*

July 23rd. Acts 21:1-19.

Reflect: Do you think Paul being courageous or foolish in his determination to go to Jerusalem? How does his attitude parallel the attitude Jesus had? (See Luke 13:31-33). *Prayer: "Lord, I often don't feel very brave. Help me to trust in you more. Amen."*