

# A DEEPER DIVE

Acts 20: 1-12  
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***Micah 6:8 – He has shown you, oh mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (NIV)***

Acts Chapter 20 – Part 1

**Paul heads to Macedonia** – Last week I included a link to a very helpful map of Paul’s journey. I include the URL here again. <https://www.understandchristianity.com/timelines/pauls-third-missionary-journey/>

Luke gives us a list of some of the people who journeyed with them, and some of the places they went. If you google “biography of people listed in Acts 20, you should get the AI brief summary of the people Luke mentions. You can see that there was quite a variety of people who were with Paul.

**Festival of the Unleavened Bread** – Some details. It takes place during the seven days right after Passover. Passover was on the 14th day of the first day of the year, and the Feast of the unleavened bread would run for the next seven days (The Gospel Coalition website is helpful here).

Unleavened bread can be made with just flour, salt, and water. The point is that it could be made quickly and taken with you if you had to leave in a hurry.

Verses to reference include– Leviticus 23:6-8; Numbers 28:16-25; Deuteronomy 16:1-8; Exodus 12: 15,19. There were two reasons primarily for making unleavened bread. First was if an unexpected guest came to your house (Genesis 19:2; 1 Samuel 28:24).

More importantly, it is used during Passover as a reminder of YHWH freeing the Jews from Egypt. Interesting history, but what does that mean for us? TGC’s website has a lot to say about this.

(<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/feast-unleavened-bread/>).

In the article the author, J. Michael Thigpen, says that the Feast and Passover can’t be separated. For us, Christ is our passover, and He provided the Exodus-like salvation. He continues, “They couldn’t wait for their bread to rise. To depart on their journey, they had to willingly leave unprepared and dependent on God. For us, the context is flipped. We’ve received salvation, but we eagerly wait its consummation. So we’re called to wait vigilantly. Rather than knowing we’ll leave tonight, we must be found ready for Christ to return at an unknown hour (Matthew 25:1-13). Nothing must occupy our attention in a way that leaves us unready to depart when he returns and we’re called home to stand before him (Luke 21: 34-36). We must strain for the return of the King with the same effort the Israelites did that night, bread dough strapped to their backs, shoes on, and staffs in hand. Like the ready Israelites, we must refuse to let anything keep us from being ready for Christ’s sure return.” These are fine words. But what does it actually mean? What do you think? If you are unfamiliar with the story of the Millerites you could google it and see one example. It’s an extreme example, but an understandable one. So, what does it mean that 2,000 + years after the ascension, that we are to wait for the return of the Lord? How is your life showing that you will be found ready at the time of Christ’s return?

**In Troas** – Luke tells us that the next event he’s going to share happened on the first day of the week. The NKJV says that this means that they were meeting on Sunday. The comments continue, “The people gathered to worship on this day for the same reason we do today, to celebrate the day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Jewish believers continued to worship on the Sabbath, which is Saturday.” This remains a discussion today. Do you think the day of worship matters? Why or why not? I have been in churches that have, by necessity, held services throughout the weekend, some starting on Friday. Would it feel odd to you to go to services on a day other than Sunday? Is there something that makes Sunday special, aside from our cultural habits?

Paul is ready to leave the area and continue his journey, but he has a lot of things he wants to leave with the new church. So, the disciples broke bread together, and Paul began to speak. Read the rest of this section from verse 7-12. It was well into the night and early the next morning that Paul spoke. A young man named Eutychus grew sleepy and fell from his perch in the window to his death. What does Paul do? In verse 12 the NKJV says “they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.” This seems to our modern ears an odd way of phrasing this. How would you say this?

Why do you think the Lord used Paul to bring Eutychus back into this life? Luke does not give us a reason for this. Do you think that this was a further confirmation of Paul’s apostolic authority, or was it simply to give comfort to the disciples after this sad accident. Or can you think of a different reason for this resurrection?

In the second half of verse 9, the NKJV says that, “Paul continued speaking.” The NIV says that, “Paul talked on and on.” Compare these versions (and others if you can). It seems to me that the NIV adds a little color to the story as “on and on” seems a little tongue-in-cheek humor about Paul’s speaking that night. What do you think Luke is doing here by including this fact that Paul kept on talking, “a long while, even till daybreak” (NKJV).

In his commentary on Acts 20, Matthew Henry is quite harsh toward Eutychus. The commentary is available on the internet, if you want to see what Henry has to say you can look into it. But, I think that Luke is just describing an event that is not uncommon. I think Eutychus was sitting in the window because it was hot and stuffy in the room (note that there were “many lamps”). And which one of us hasn’t felt the drowsiness come on during a Sunday service occasionally? Have you ever nodded off, or surreptitiously looked at your phone during the service? Maybe you were simply “somewhere else” as the saying goes, and your thoughts wandered. All that to say, I think we need to give Eutychus a bit of grace here, far more than Mr. Henry does in his commentary. But I also think we should show respect to our Pastors and to the Word of the Lord by restraining our temptation to look at our phones or to let our minds wander during a service.

**Epilogue** – Eutychus’ name means “fortunate.” Luke is giving some fast-paced summary until verse 7. Suddenly he slows down his narrative to focus on this one event and this one person. Why do you think he does this? What can we learn from this story? Matthew Henry says that what happens to Eutychus is a “punishment.” I really can’t get on board with that reading of the text.

Warren Wiersbe says, “Is there a spiritual meaning behind this miracle? [the miracle of Eutychus being brought back to life]. Eutychus ... had done nothing deserving of God’s help; yet because of God’s grace, he was restored to life. He had fallen (all have fallen in Adam). And he was dead (all are dead in sin); he was given life by grace alone.” I don’t think Luke includes anything in his account of the early church just because it’s a good story. This is definitely a good story, but what is the spiritual meaning of it—as Wiersbe asks? I am not profound enough to give an opinion on Wiersbe’s take on the lesson of this story, but if it allows us to consider that our lives and our future are all wrapped up in the grace of God, we should give thanks because of that.