

Paul's Trial Before Festus & Agrippa (part 2)

Acts Chapter 26

- Act 26:1 **1) Paul Speaks** vs 1-23
Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and {proceeded} to make his defense:
- After Festus lays out the purpose (Acts 25:23-27) Paul is invited to speak.
- Act 26:2 "In regard to all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that I am about to make my defense before you today;
- Act 26:3 especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among {the} Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.
- Paul is happy to have someone to hear him who is familiar with Jewish customs and traditions, especially after Felix and Festus. Besides that, Paul is always happy to have someone else to preach the gospel to.
- Act 26:4 "So then, all Jews know my manner of life from my youth up, which from the beginning was spent among my {own} nation and at Jerusalem;
- Act 26:5 since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived {as} a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.
- Act 26:6 "And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers;
- Act 26:7 {the promise} to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve {God} night and day. And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews.
- Act 26:8 "Why is it considered incredible among you {people} if God does raise the dead?
- Act 26:9 "So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.
- Act 26:10 "And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them.
- Act 26:11 "And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.
- Paul describes his his career. A Pharisee, a persecutor of the Christian sect, an earnest servant of God.
 - Paul never forgot his persecution of the Christians. He carried this always.
- Act 26:12 "While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests,
- Act 26:13 at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me.
- Act 26:14 "And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'
- Act 26:15 "And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.
- Act 26:16 'But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you;
- Act 26:17 rescuing you from the {Jewish} people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you,
- Act 26:18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'
- This is the 3rd time we read this testimony. We will hear it again in Galatians. 4 TIMES WE HEAR PAUL'S TESTIMONY!

- It is evident that a personal testimony was important in Paul's ministry. It was the springboard to the Gospel.
 - Do you have a clear presentation of your testimony that leads into a Gospel presentation? This doesn't matter if your testimony is one of a vile background or one that is being brought up in a Christian home that seems mild by comparison. Ultimately, all testimonies are the same. A personal recognition that we individually stand before a holy standard, the 10 commandments, that we all have broken. We each will pay the penalty with only one other option. Someone else paying that penalty. Jesus Christ paid that penalty for us and this grace is available to us by faith, believing in Jesus' completed work of substitutionary death on a cross.
 - Paul was telling all that he was religious. And then a glorious savior appeared to him and delivered him from religion and gave him the truth, and an assignment.
 - Paul was to be a minister (servant) to what he has seen and will see.
 - Paul was to be a witness (messenger) to what he has seen and will see.
- Paul's ministry was not to create a message or experience, but in whatever experience a Christian finds himself in he is to serve and witness to the gospel message.

Act 26:19 "So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision,

Act 26:20 but {kept} declaring both to those of Damascus first, and {also} at Jerusalem and {then} throughout all the region of Judea, and {even} to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.

- "Repentance looks like something" (Focht) There are deeds / works in repentance it is not just an inner feeling.

Act 26:21 "For this reason {some} Jews seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death.

Act 26:22 "So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place;

Act 26:23 that the Christ was to suffer, {and} that by reason of {His} resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the {Jewish} people and to the Gentiles."

- Paul says that the Prophets and Moses clearly point to a Messiah that was to suffer (die) and that He would rise from the dead and proclaim "light" to all people.
- The Gospel - Death, Burial, Resurrection and Our Identification with it.

Act 26:24 **2) Festus' Response** vs 24-27

While {Paul} was saying this in his defense, Festus *said in a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind! {Your} great learning is driving you mad."

- Festus exclaims "Paul You're Crazy."
- 1 Corinthians 1:18 "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."
- The gospel properly presented will cause some to think we are crazy.

Act 26:25 But Paul *said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth.

Act 26:26 "For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner.

Act 26:27 "King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do."

- Paul declares his isn't crazy but is speaking the truth.
- Paul calls Agrippa to acknowledge that these things are true.
- Paul challenges Agrippa **DO YOU BELIEVE?** Our message must be delivered with a challenge.

Act 26:28 **3) Agrippa's Response** vs 28-32

Agrippa {replied} to Paul, "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian."

- Agrippa says "in a short time" could mean:
 - So quickly without a long study or research
 - Almost
 Either way the point is that Agrippa is recognizing that this moment is a decision time.
- Why "ALMOST"?
 - To one side of Agrippa is Festus. He thinks this Christianity is CRAZY. Agrippa doesn't want to appear crazy.
 - To the other side is Bernice. A relationship to sin. Becoming a Christian would judge not only me but her as well. Becoming a Christian would ruin this relationship.

- In front of him was Paul. A Christian in chains. Yet he seems to have a greater freedom even though he is in chains. Do I want that kind of freedom?

Act 26:29 And Paul {said,} "I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains."

- Paul says not only you Agrippa, but Bernice, and you Festus, and also all these who are in attendance everyone who hears my voice.
- Paul wishes that all men everywhere would be set free, as well as from their chains.

Act 26:30 The king stood up and the governor and Bernice, and those who were sitting with them,

- When the king stands up the meeting is over. When the king stands up he is done and does not need to hear any more.

Act 26:31 and when they had gone aside, they {began} talking to one another, saying, "This man is not doing anything worthy of death or imprisonment."

Act 26:32 And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

- Agrippa determines that Paul has done no wrong. Yet he has appealed to Caesar. So to Caesar he will go.
- But more than that was decided. Agrippa decided against Jesus. He decided his eternity with the word "almost"
- Are you living the "almost" life.
 - The parachute almost opened
 - I almost got that job
 - I almost quit smoking
 - I almost won
 - I almost passed that course
 - I almost did the right thing
 - I almost gave my life to Christ
 - I almost made it to heaven
 - I almost escaped Hell.

Felix – Puts Off

Festus – Shifts Responsibility

Agrippa – Knows and Understands but chooses not to live

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