

Acts Chapter 26

Application of the Word of God

I. Saul BC

1 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: 2 "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, 3 especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.

- No flattery just respect for the office:

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God...**7** Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

- We are urged to pray for those in authority:

1 Timothy 2:1 ...I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

- Pray for ALL men to come to knowledge of the truth
- **Last to be prayed for:** Rich, Prominent, Famous, those in Government

Paul has a heart for Agrippa. All Paul says next is for Agrippa's salvation!

4 "My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. 5 They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

- Born in Tarsus but raised in Jerusalem.
- These guys knew me as a boy... and a Pharisee

6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. 7 To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews.

- Judged for the believing the promise of God to our common Jewish fathers?
- What promise?

Resurrection...Life after Death...Is it a reality? Is there really a "better place"?

- We hear it continually at funerals and shake our head but do we believe?

8 Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

- **Paul singles out King Agrippa...**You claim to believe the Word of God

Matthew 19:26 "... but with God all things are possible."

- **Why is Paul driving home Resurrection?**
 1. Resurrection implies judgment of God; stand before a Holy God
 2. There is no Salvation apart from the resurrection of Jesus Christ

Romans 10:9 ...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

- Agrippa and those listening would remember those 3 days 30 years previous
 1. Darkness from noon to 3pm
 2. Earthquake
 3. It is finished!
 4. Temple Veil ripped from top to bottom
 5. Saints walking around Jerusalem
 6. Empty tomb
 7. Witness of Apostles and over 500 still alive

1 Corinthians 15:6 ...He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present

**Everyone remembers when BC ended and AD began!
Do you really believe God King Agrippa?**

9 "Indeed, I myself [like these guys] thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.10 This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them.

- **Paul BC**
 1. "I believed that Christians were wrong"
 2. "I believed that hurting/discrediting the Name of Jesus was serving God"
 - I locked up anyone who claimed the Name of Christ
 - I "Cast his vote" to kill Christians in front of me; i.e....
 - a) Member of the Sanhedrin!
 - b) Married: Wife died or deserted him after conversion

11 And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

- I tortured innocent people/ Filled with rage and tracked down believers like animals

SUMMARY Paul BC. Like these, I believed I was serving God by persecuting God's people.

II. Conversion: Paul sees the Light

- **But God...**

12 "While thus occupied [killing and torturing], as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13 at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. 14 And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to **kick against the goads.**'

"It is hard for you to kick against the goads"

- A Stubborn ox that will not move forward kicks backward at a board of nails

The ox, when wounded, is so very foolish as to dash its foot against the goad, and consequently drives it deeper into himself and hurts himself even more. This is the natural manner of men till God makes something more than beasts of them....Let me say to you, sinner, yield your heart to the goads of divine love, for, "it is hard for you to kick against the pricks." Oh, think not that the Savior's blood will be unable to cleanse you! Not your worthiness, but your unworthiness attracts His attention; not your strength, but your weakness; not your riches, but your poverty. He came to save just such as you are. Lost one, but loved one, trust in Him! [Spurgeon]

- When Peter's sin met Jesus loving eyes Peter "wept bitterly" and stopped kicking
- When Paul's sin met the brightness of the Glory of God he was converted
- Rescued Pit-Bull

15 So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 16 But **rise and stand on your feet**; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.

- **Rise and Stand:**
 1. **Minister:** Serve others
 2. **Witness:** Tell others

New Commission: Love God by Loving Others

- **What is left in our wake after being with others?**
 1. Death, Discouragement, Demoralization
 2. Life, Light, and Love. Encouragement. Healing. Restoration. Salvation?

What fruit are you bearing?

17 I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, 18 to open their eyes, in order to **turn them from darkness to light**, and from the **power of Satan to God**, that they may **receive forgiveness** of sins and an **inheritance** among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

- Deliver you from your enemies and back to your enemies to save your enemies
- **Paul now the deliverer:**
 1. From Blindness to Sight
 2. From Darkness to Light
 3. From Satan to God
 4. From Condemned to Forgiven
 5. From Ruin to Inheritance

SUMMARY Paul's Conversion: Saved to save others...even Kings

III. Paul AD

19 "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should **repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.** 21 For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.

Luke 3:8 [John the Baptist] "...bear fruits worthy of repentance"

- **Message:** Prove out your Salvation by the way you treat others!

22 Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come— 23 that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to **rise from the dead,** and would **proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.**"

- **OT Confirms my message:**
 1. Messiah would suffer
 2. Messiah would be first to rise from the dead
 3. Messiah would proclaim Light to the entire World [Using His people]

SUMMARY Paul AD: Deliverer. Minister and Witness of the Light

IV. Paul's Challenge: Close the Deal

24 Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"

- I wasn't talking to you Festus. Nervous reaction. Fidgety.

1 Corinthians 1:18 ... the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

- **Message:** A man died on an old rugged cross for your sins.
- Believe/Live/Saved. Don't believe/Die/Judged

25 But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of **truth and reason.**"

Paul knows that not only is his gospel true, it is also reasonable. Our God may sometimes

act above reason, but never contrary to reason. [Guzic]

- Paul respectful but turn attention back to Agrippa...

26 For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. 27 **King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."**

Closing the deal!

- Agrippa looks around the room:
 1. Jews staring
 2. Governor Festus [just called Paul mad] waiting
 3. Bernice glaring "What would this mean to my lifestyle"

28 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

- **Almost:** So close but oh so far...Expanse is Eternal!

29 And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains."

"O that men were wise enough to see that suffering for Christ is honour, that loss for truth is gain, that the truest dignity rests in wearing the chain upon the arm rather than endure the chain upon the soul." [Spurgeon]

30 When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; 31 and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains." 32 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

- **Listeners in bondage:** Festus, Agrippa, Bernice, Religious Leaders, Prominent
 1. Bondage to People Pleasing
 2. Servitude to Riches/Stuff
 3. Slavery to discontentment
 4. Bound for judgment
- **Paul was free:**
 1. Free from bondage to sin
 2. Free from consequences of sin
 3. Free from judgment of men
 4. Free from condemnation of God

John 8:34 "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. **36**...if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

