

Acts of the Apostles – 26

I. The Inspired History

- A. Paul Speaks Before King Agrippa (1-27).
 - 1. He greets Agrippa (1-3).
 - 2. He introduces his Jewish heritage (4-5).
 - 3. He introduces the resurrection of the dead (6-8).
 - 4. He describes his conversion again (9-18).
 - 5. He describes his ministry (19-23).
 - 6. He responds to Festus's interruption (24-27).
- B. King Agrippa Responds to Paul (28-32).
 - 1. King Agrippa was a belly worshipper (28-29).
 - 2. Paul's appeal to Caesar keeps him bound (30-32).

II. The Sense and Meaning

- A. Paul greeted King Agrippa and commended the opportunity to defend himself to him (1-3).
 - 1. Governor Festus arranged the meeting and introduced Paul to the audience (25:22-27).
 - 2. This Agrippa is Herod Agrippa II, son and successor to the worm-eaten Herod (12:23).
 - 3. Bernice was his sister, who had married an uncle and lived with Agrippa incestuously.
 - 4. Beckoning with a hand for silence or to indicate a speech was common (12:17; 21:40).
 - 5. Agrippa desired to hear Paul and gives him liberty to preach (Luke 21:12; Prov 21:1).
 - 6. The will of the Lord had been done (21:14)! Though bound, he preached to a king.
 - 7. Paul was happy with a great opportunity to testify of Jesus Christ and defend himself.
 - 8. No mere Roman, Agrippa was a Jew and well understood the nature of their religion.
- B. Paul introduced his conservative Jewish heritage to establish orthodoxy as a start point (4-5).
 - 1. Paul's educational background and accomplishments at Jerusalem were well known, and thus his character was already an established fact, if the Jews would testify.
 - 2. If the Jews were to tell the truth, they would admit that Paul was an excellent Pharisee.
 - 3. Far from being a radical Jew, Paul had been a member of the most conservative sect.
- C. Paul introduced the resurrection of the dead as the chief issue for his incarceration (6-8).
 - 1. Though a chief point of his preaching, he had also used it to his advantage (23:6-9).
 - 2. He directed the focus of his testimony to a single issue of importance (6-8,22-23).
 - 3. He identified the resurrection as a promise of hope made by God to Israel.
 - a. If he can show his doctrine to be Jewish in origin, it will prove his innocence.
 - b. The resurrection is the chief subject here, but it is Christ's resurrection (25:19).
 - c. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was a promise made and fulfilled (13:32-33).
 - d. It is not mere human resurrection alone, but rather the resurrection of Messiah.
 - e. The transition to his testimony will presume this reference to Jesus Christ (9).
 - f. The twelve tribes served God with outward zeal to secure Messiah's benefits.
 - g. He summarized his situation as being accused of the Jews for Jewish doctrine.
 - 4. He appeals to Agrippa personally as to the reasonableness of his faith in God's power.
- D. He describes his conversion to Christianity again for the benefit of King Agrippa (9-18).
 - 1. He had given this testimony in the Hebrew tongue to the Jews in Jerusalem (22:3-21).
 - 2. Prior to Paul's conversion, he thought in his conscience he ought to oppose Christians.
 - 3. If we serve in sincerity and zeal, the merciful Lord can count imperfection as faithful service (I Kings 15:14; I Timothy 1:12-14).
 - 4. His testimony here includes more of the ministerial charge he received from Jesus.
 - a. The Lord Jesus chose His greatest enemy to magnify His glorious power.

- b. Not only did Paul see some things on the Damascus Road, he would see more.
 5. Jesus Christ told of his ministry turning the Gentiles from darkness to gospel light.
 - a. Paul could not influence a natural man at all (I Cor 2:14; 1:18; II Cor 4:3-4).
 - b. Jesus saved us legally from Satan, sin, and death by His obedience (Rom 5:19).
 - c. The Spirit saved us vitally from Satan, sin, and death by power (Eph 1:19; 2:1).
 - d. Subsequent to the cross, there has been no legal transaction at all (John 19:30).
 - e. Subsequent to eternity, there has been no legal transaction but Christ's cross.
 - f. Paul didn't persuade any man to believe but the elect only (13:48; II Tim 2:10).
 - g. Paul only opened their eyes practically – regeneration gave them sight (Jn 3:3).
 - h. Paul only gave them light practically – for Christ is the true Light (John 1:1-9).
 - i. Paul only hurt Satan practically – for Jesus is the Stronger Man (Lu 11:20-22).
 - j. Paul only gave forgiveness practically – for Jesus paid for sins (Col 2:13-15).
 - k. Paul only gave hope of inheritance – for God predestinated us (Eph 1:11-14).
 - l. Paul only sanctified practically – for true holiness is by Christ (Heb 10:10-14).
- E. He described his ministry as fulfilling a Divine charge and teaching the Jewish hope (19-23).
 1. How could Paul be guilty of a crime, since he was only obeying the heavenly vision?
 2. Paul's ministry was not one of "faith only," for he taught works meet for repentance.
 3. This was all the Jews had against Paul – he was obeying his heavenly vision to preach.
 4. And though they had tried to kill him several times, God had helped him obviously.
 5. Paul summarized his ministry as exactly what the Old Testament prophesied of Christ.
 6. Note the Spirit's wisdom in "small and great" to confirm Paul's consistent doctrine.
- F. Festus interrupted Paul, declared him mad, and forced Paul to appeal to Agrippa (24-27).
 1. Festus had already shown a bad attitude toward Jesus and the resurrection (25:18-20).
 2. As a Roman, Festus would have little understanding of the prophets or Messiah.
 3. Pagan skeptics have little to say in refutation but to argue against our intelligence.
 4. Paul retains his respect for this pagan and ignorant governor but defends his words.
 5. Paul answers Festus by appealing to Agrippa that his testimony agrees with Scripture and recent history, which were both known by Agrippa.
 6. Paul turns his appeal directly to Agrippa and seeks to persuade him to the gospel.
 - a. Please remember that history regards this man as an incestuous sinner.
 - b. Yet as a Jew, he likely believed the prophets' messages regarding Messiah.
 - c. But Paul is asking more, for he is asking for faith in fulfillment in Christ Jesus.
 - d. If Paul's statement was discernment of spirits, why did he ask if he believed?
 - e. The rhetorical force of the subjunctive mood "I know that thou believest" is very powerful and fits with his question better than any other sense. Again, if these words are in the indicative mood, why did Paul ask the question?
 - f. King Agrippa shows no evidence whatsoever of being an unconverted elect.
 - g. His lack of faith and works by faith show him to be no more than the devils.
 - h. Let all who ever feel conviction or hear exhortation, flee to Christ for safety.
- G. Agrippa shows himself to be a belly worshipper by rejecting the testimony of Paul (28-29).
 1. Almost may be good enough in some things, but it does not cut it with the gospel.
 2. "Almost persuaded" are words that should haunt our delays in obeying Jesus Christ.
 3. Paul appeals to all those present with fervent desire to convert and be just like himself.
 4. Paul offers no comfort or description of Agrippa being unique as an unconverted elect.
- H. Paul's appeal to Caesar keeps him bound, though Agrippa would have loosed him (30-32).
 1. Once invoking the right to Caesar, you could not back down later and retract the plea.
 2. Paul convinced his hearers the Jews were wrong in their accusations and call for death.
 3. This entire illustrious audience vindicates Paul against the charges of the Jews, who had to return to Jerusalem shamed and condemned for their false accusations.
 4. The Lord wanted Paul to preach the gospel in Rome, so the will of the Lord was done!