

A Study in Acts

Chapter Twenty-Six – Paul’s Defense Before Agrippa.

ACTS 26:9-18:

In our previous lesson, Paul gave his defense to the new Roman Governor and when Festus tried to push Paul to go to Jerusalem, Paul appealed his case to Caesar (remember, Paul knew the Jews wished to kill him). Now that he has appealed his case, Festus finds himself in the unenviable position of figuring out what charge must accompany Paul to Rome. An opportunity has presented itself in the meeting of Herod Agrippa II and Festus, so Festus has arranged for Paul to share his case with Agrippa in hopes that he will be able to determine a charge.

In this lesson, we will present his case Agrippa and set in motion things that would begin the process of fulfilling the promise that the Lord made to him in Jerusalem:

Acts 23:11 *“But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.””*

Text #1

Acts 26:9-11 *“Indeed, I myself 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. 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.”*

We have reached the portion where Paul begins to recount the history of his conversion. Of the three primary accounts (**Chapter 9, 22** and here), this one is probably the most informative concerning Paul’s mind set in the face of the presence of the Lord – see **Vs.19**.

We additionally note from Paul’s words the level of success he has known in Judaism. He not only has brought back prisoners, but also cast a vote. This practice would be reserved for those in authority and suggests that Paul was already a sitting member of the Sanhedrin. This would coincide with his words to the churches of Galatia- see **Galatians 1:14**.

Text #2

Acts 26:12-14 *“While thus occupied, 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.’”*

This portion coincides with - **9:3-4; 22:6-7**.

Hebrew Language: Here, Paul introduces a new fact that ties all the accounts together. In **Chapter 9:7**, those with Paul *“hearing a voice but seeing no one”*, we understand that Luke used the Greek word ‘Phonas’, which means, hearing without understanding.

In **Chapter 22:9**, Paul would state, *“they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me”*, Paul shared the Greek word ‘Phonan’, which means to hear and understand. However, it is preceded by *“did not”*.

Finally, Paul will reveal the missing piece of information that ties all three accounts together with clarity. Paul states that the Lord spoke to him in Hebrew. As we discussed in **Chapter 22**, when Paul spoke to the multitudes in Hebrew, this was not their everyday language and only those who were rabbinically trained or educated in the temple were familiar with this. We then see that those who were with Paul heard a voice (**Chapter 9**), but clearly did not understand the language (**Chapter 22**).

Goads: See notes from **Chapter 9:5**.

Text #3

Acts 26:15-18 *“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. 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.”*

I Will Reveal to You: As Paul gives us instruction missing from Luke’s account or even his first defense in **Chapter 22**, he shares that his work would not be anything of his own design. He would share that it would all be revealed to him by the Lord. This coincides with his words to the churches of Galatia, note:

Galatians 1:11-12 *“But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹² For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*

Vs. 18: As we contemplate the power of the commission that Paul would receive from the Lord, here are some important insights to this message being preached to all men.

#1. Jesus would teach His disciples in preparation for the kingdom, you cannot serve two masters (in this case Him verses riches) – **Luke 16:13**. Paul would later share that being a child of God in Christ, justified by His gift, you are the servant of the one you present yourself to, you cannot serve two masters – **Romans 6:16**. The Gospel was intended to open eyes to this choice. This equates to conviction.

#2. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is purely intended to arrest the souls of men to turn them from disaster, **“to turn them from”**. Paul will share with Christians that they were once dead, then they were made alive to walk with God – **Ephesians 2:1-10**. Note his words to the brethren in

Colosse – Colossians 1:13-14 **“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”**

This equates the full conversion of a life by the Gospel.

#3. Through the saving power of the Gospel, sins are removed and walking in light through the continuous power of the Lord, both in forgiveness in repentance and instruction and growth, make us children of the light.

John 3:19-21 *“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”*

John 8:12 *“Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”*

Romans 13:12 *“The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.”*

2 Corinthians 6:14 *“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?”*

1 Thessalonians 5:5 *“You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.”*

#4. Finally, the true selling point of the Gospel’s message, **HOPE!!!** The Lord uses the word “inheritance”, and we should appreciate that this is the legacy of all those in Christ Jesus. Being of the Son, we are now qualified to have an inheritance in Him.

2 Peter 1:10-11 *“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹ for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

This would be Paul’s work, as well as all the Apostles of Jesus Christ, and every saint in Him from them to now. This is what he wants all people to see!