

## A Study in Acts

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

#### ACTS 26:19-32:

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 26:19-23** *“Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.<sup>22</sup> 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—<sup>23</sup> 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.””*

**Paul Faced a Choice:** We know Paul’s history as a Jew. We know that he was on the fast track to being a ruler among them. We know that he thought, in good conscience, that he must do many things against the Way (**22:4; Vs. 9**). Instead of being self-righteous like many of the others like him (**Romans 10:1-4**), Paul was at a crossroads in his life.

Since he was a man serving God in good conscience, his conscience being educated, he made a choice.

*“I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.”*

**Repent, Turn to God, and do Works Befitting Repentance:** Paul states that his message of turning people from darkness to light, was not in any way passive. It demanded a recognizable choice made (just like his own), complete conversion to it, and transformational acts to show it.

**Vs. 22-23:** Paul shares in **Vs. 21**, that the reason he was seized from the beginning, is only because he preached what God had said all along would come. **Vs. 23** shares that Jesus as the Christ would fulfill everything spoken in **Psalm 2, 16, 22, 45, Isaiah 49, 53**, etc.

Paul would share to the Christians in Rome that this was the some of the very heart of the Gospel's message (the fulfillment of prophecy, a realm which can only belong to God).

**Romans 1:1-2** *“Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God <sup>2</sup> which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,”*

Paul also mentions the fulfillment of the great promise to Abraham that through the Seed, all men would be blessed (gentile and Jew). In the Gospel of Luke, immediately after Jesus was presented in the temple, a just and devout man of God would be brought to the child by the Spirit, and blessed God over the child, knowing the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, the prophecy of Isaiah 49 would be in Jesus, note:

**Luke 2:29-32**

*“Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,  
According to Your word;  
<sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation  
<sup>31</sup> Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,  
<sup>32</sup> A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,  
And the glory of Your people Israel.””*

**Text #2**

**Acts 26:24-26** *“Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!”*

*<sup>25</sup> But he said, “I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. <sup>26</sup> 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.”*

**First:** Make no mistake, it is the mention of the resurrection that is going to have Festus thinking Paul to be insane. This is easily determined by Paul's retort concerning what Agrippa himself would be able to testify to. But before we recognize what Agrippa knows, Paul states that he only speaks, *“truth and reason”*.

Contemplate for just a moment, **can there be any greater madness than to ignore the eternal interests of the soul?** A great talking point! **Is it not simply prudent thought to consider our divine nature and the sought relationship with the Creator?**

**Matthew 6:19-21** *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

**Second:** Coming back to Paul's retort. Paul shares as evidence of truth and reason surrounding the resurrection, eyewitnesses' evidence. Usually, we share 1 Corinthians 15 and the named witnesses and the masses that witnessed it who were still alive to testify when Paul wrote that

letter. However, here Paul does something that goes to the very heart of Christian evidence, he shares that Herod is aware of the resurrection of Jesus.

Whether a direct witness, or receiving evidence from a firsthand witness, even Herod will not deny the event, in fact, he will state that it brings him to the very point about a choice that Paul shared caused him to convert.

### Text #3

**Acts 26:27-32 “King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.”**

**<sup>28</sup> Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You almost persuade me to become a Christian.”**

**<sup>29</sup> 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.”**

**<sup>30</sup> When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; <sup>31</sup> and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, “This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains.”**

**<sup>32</sup> Then Agrippa said to Festus, “This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.””**

**First:** We are going to learn something about Herod’s character. He is going to be able to ignore for his own desire’s sake, what he knows to be fact. Paul will express what many of us pray and wish for to those who hear the Gospel taught, that they become, *“almost and altogether such as I am”*.

**Second:** Herod is going to refer to what those who obey the Gospel are being referred to, Christian. This is one of the three places in scripture that this term is used; **Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16.**

### Strong's Lexicon

#### Christianos: Christian

Original Word: Χριστιανός

Part of Speech: Noun, Masculine

Transliteration: Christianos

Pronunciation: khris-tee-an-os'

Phonetic Spelling: (khris-tee-an-os')

Definition: Christian

Meaning: a Christian.

Word Origin: Derived from Χριστός (Christos), meaning "Christ" or "Anointed One," with the suffix -ιανός (-ianos), indicating belonging to or a follower of.

**Third:** We come full circle to **Chapter 23:11**.

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

Remember, for the promises of God, which are intertwined with our knowledge of choices; to take effect, they are laced with our need to do the expected, to see them become reality. Had Paul not defended himself in the trials, he would have been killed. Had he not appealed his case to Caesar, he would have been returned to Jerusalem and killed. This will continue to play out on the trip to Rome. It demands that he and all of us who look to the promises of God through Christ, trust in Him, against what we may think to be a better way.