

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Acts: The Continuing Earthly Ministry Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Part VI: The Ministry Of The Universal Church In Its Spread To The Ends Of The Earth, Acts 8:26-28:31

E. Christ's Use Of The Apostle Paul To Spearhead Worldwide Outreach, Acts 14:4-28:31

31. Christ's Permissive Cornering Of Paul To Corral Him Into Heading In God's Will

(Acts 25:1-12)

I. Introduction

- A. Sometimes, God allows events to occur in our lives as believers that "corner" us into making choices we might otherwise not make simply to corral us into heading in a direction that God wants to take us.
- B. This was Paul's experience in Acts 25:1-12, and we view the passage for our edification needs as follows:

II. Christ's Permissive Cornering Of Paul To Corral Him Into Heading In God's Will, Acts 25:1-12.

- A. We know from Acts 23:11 that the Lord Jesus Christ wanted the Apostle Paul to testify of Him in Rome just as he had testified of Him at the Jerusalem temple, cf. Acts 21:40.
- B. Yet, events that involved Paul's foes and a change in rulers over his charge had left Paul in prison for two years, impeding God's plan for him to arrive at Rome, Acts 24:25-27.
- C. Thus, Acts 25:1-12 reveals how Christ in His sovereignty let Paul's foes and a civil ruler so press him into a corner that he had to make an unusual decision that God might head him for Rome:
 - 1. Paul himself wrote in 1 Corinthians 7:21-23 that it was God's will that we Christians peacefully seek to be set free from civil bondage so that we might better serve the Lord in human liberty.
 - 2. Paul applied this directive in Acts 25:11c-12, a move that led him to be transferred to be tried before Caesar in his best effort to gain his eventual freedom (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Acts 25:11), and it came due to Paul's being cornered by his foes into making a legal appeal, Acts 25:1-11b:
 - a. When Festus came to the throne to replace king Felix, he quickly traveled to Jerusalem in an effort to establish a good rule over that politically volatile city, Acts 25:1; Bib. Know. Com., N. T., p. 422.
 - b. The Jewish leaders there used Felix's arrival and interest in them to air their grievance against Paul, urging Felix to transfer him to Jerusalem for trial in order to kill Paul in secret along the way, Acts 25:2-3. They had a weak case against him, so their best hope was to ambush Paul en route, Ibid.
 - c. "Evidently Festus felt their request was unreasonable so he promised to reopen the case in Caesarea. Paul was already there and Festus was returning there," Ibid.; Acts 25:4-5.
 - d. When the case was reopened in Caesarea, the Jewish leaders brought many serious, capital charges against Paul though they could not prove them. Paul countered them all, but since Festus as their new ruler wanted to please the Jewish leaders, he asked Paul as a Roman citizen who had rights regarding his case if he would be willing to return to Jerusalem for trial by him there, Acts 25:6-9.
 - e. Paul knew by this question that certain death eventually awaited him in his current imprisonment: (1) His public transfer to Jerusalem would be life-threatening since the Jews would know he was being moved, and could ambush and kill him, Ibid., p. 423. (2) Were Paul thus ever to reach Jerusalem, he knew the likelihood of his getting a fair trial there was "remote", Ibid. (3) Also, with Festus changing his mind about transferring him to Jerusalem just to please the Jews, Paul knew it was likely that his foes could persuade Festus to rule against him and hand him over to them, Ibid.
 - f. Paul also knew the Jews would be less likely to press false charges before Caesar, an emperor who could not be as easily politically swayed by them, giving him his best opportunity for a release!
 - g. Thus, Paul replied to Festus that since he had done nothing worthy of death, he would appeal to Caesar, using his citizenship as a Roman to force Festus to send his case to Rome, Acts 25:10-11.
 - h. Festus thus conceded to Paul's appeal, and Paul was thus headed in bondage for Rome (Acts 25:12), the destination that Christ wanted Paul to reach so he could minister there, Acts 23:11!

Lesson: Christ ALLOWED secular and evil foes to "corner" Paul into making an unusual appeal for his case to be transferred to Caesar's court in order to get him headed for Rome in line with God's will!

Application: (1) If our OPTIONS in life get TRIMMED, may we see this as God's PERMISSIVE will! (2) May we NOT get distraught if FOES or OFFICIALS trim our options, for they are UNDER GOD!