

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

32. Christ's Use Of Paul To DETAIL His Beliefs For The Church LONG-TERM

(Acts 25:13-26:32)

I. Introduction

- A. Sometimes the Lord allows us to become involved in activities that may seem unproductive for us.
- B. However, there is no wasted effort in God's service, for it all counts often in ways that we cannot initially understand. Such was the case in Paul's address to king Agrippa, and we view it for our encouragement:

II. Christ's Use Of Paul To DETAIL His Beliefs For The Church LONG-TERM, Acts 25:13-26:32.

- A. Paul had already appealed to Caesar, so he was not required to defend himself before a king like Agrippa who had come to visit king Festus, Acts 25:13; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., fn. to Acts 25:13.
- B. However, when Festus told Agrippa of Paul's case (Acts 25:14-21), Agrippa said he wanted to hear Paul testify (Acts 25:22a), so Festus agreed to the hearing the next day (Acts 25:22b), and Paul took the opportunity granted by this hearing to share the Gospel with king Agrippa, Acts 25:23-26:2a.
- C. Paul knew that Agrippa, who was Herod Agrippa II, son of Herod Agrippa I and great-grandson of Herod the Great, knew much about Judaism and Christianity, Ibid.; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 426.
- D. Accordingly, he took the opportunity to expound his testimony at length to evangelize him, Acts 26:2b-3.
- E. Paul thus repeated his testimony given before in Acts, elaborating at greater length on his theology, and when he came to the resurrection of Christ, a concept not acceptable to Festus' Roman way of thinking, Festus interrupted Paul, crying out that his great learning had driven him mad, Acts 26:24.
- F. Paul politely replied that he was not insane, but that he spoke the truth, facts of which he noted he knew King Agrippa understood due to his awareness of the history of Judaism and Early Christianity, 26:25-26.
- G. At this point, Paul addressed king Agrippa directly, asking him if he believed the Jewish prophets, 26:27. This was a tactical maneuver that cornered this king: Agrippa would not deny the Jewish prophets since that would be politically harmful to him as a ruler of Jews, but claiming he believed the prophets would cause Paul to ask why he would not trust in Jesus Who had fulfilled prophecy as the Messiah!
- H. To avoid being thus cornered, Agrippa wryly asked Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" (Acts 26:28 NIV; Ibid.)
- I. Paul replied that he wished that all who heard him would be as he was except for his chains, Acts 26:29.
- J. This session ended with no conversion of anyone present, Acts 26:30. All that it humanly appeared at the time to achieve was to confirm that Paul was innocent in line with past official rulings, Acts 26:31-32.
- K. Though this witnessing effort by Paul may have humanly seemed unproductive at the time, the Church *long-term* is richly blessed due to the extensive content Paul gave in his extensive testimony (as follows):
 - 1. In Acts 26:7 KJV, Paul said "our twelve tribes . . . earnestly serve God" a phrase opposing the belief of British-Israelism that ten of the tribes were lost after the Babylonian Captivity and never returned to Israel; Ibid., p. 424. *Mormonism, Seventh-Day Adventism* and early Russellism that changed into the **Jehovah's Witnesses** all grew up out of this error (Jan Karel Van Baalen, The Chaos of Cults, 1973, p. 162, 257), so Paul's word that all twelve tribes were back in Israel after the exile is *priceless* to us!
 - 2. Acts 26:15-18 KJV records Jesus' detailed message to Paul about the Gospel he was to preach, and it concludes with the claim " . . . that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in **me**." That last pronoun, "me", indicates Paul was still citing Jesus, meaning that **Jesus Himself undeniably stated** that justification was by faith alone, an *invaluable* truth opposite the many foes to the doctrine down through Church History!

Lesson: *Though Paul went beyond his legal duties to defend himself anew before Agrippa just to try to witness to him, and though this effort at the time may have humanly appeared to be unproductive, BECAUSE Paul SAID what he DID, the Church LONG-TERM is MUCH the RICHER for it!*

Application: *May we use every opportunity we have to serve Christ even if the effort seems futile from our view, for GOD MAKES our endeavors productive in ways we may not initially comprehend.*