

ACTS 26:1-32 PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE KING AGRIPPA II

Background: Paul was under house arrest in Caesarea for two years. Governor Festus, new to this office and eager to resolve longstanding problems with the Jews, sought the council of King Agrippa II to see if there was a legitimate charge against Paul. He, the King, Bernice (the King's sister), military men, and prominent citizens of Caesarea are gathered to hear Paul's defense, the subject matter of Acts 26.

- This is the fifth and last of Paul's defenses before going to Rome.
- This is his longest and most carefully constructed defense.
- This, his final defense, is before Romans with no Jewish interference.
 - His first two defenses were before Jews with Roman soldiers present, Chapters 22 and 23.
 - His second two defenses were before Romans with Jews present, Chapters 24 and 25.

[25:22-27: Governor Festus introduces Paul before Agrippa and the dignitaries.]

26:1-23 Paul Defends Himself

v. 1-3 His Introduction

- Agrippa II was an _____ in Jewish affairs.
- “in all _____:” i.e., religious institutions and ritual laws
- “in all _____:” i.e., subjects of dispute about the law

v. 4, 5 His Past Commitment to the Judaism of His Day

- “all the Jews _____ (perfect active indicative) these things”
- “From the very first, they _____ me; that I lived as a _____.”
- “They could testify to these things if they were _____.”

v. 6-8 His Present Hope: The Reality of Jesus, The Messiah, and His Resurrection

- v. 6 “I am now _____ upon (the basis of) the hope of the promise, which God made to our _____” (i.e., THE PATRIARCHS: _____, _____, and _____).
The Promise = The Messiah (compare Acts 13:32-35)
- v. 7 “The twelve tribes (of Israel) still hope for this promise.”
- v. 8 “Why should _____ (plural) think it _____ that God should raise the dead (plural)?

Paul is saying, “It is this hope fulfilled in Jesus that is the major charge against me.”

v. 9-11 His Past Persecuting Zeal Against Christians

- v. 9 “Truly, I thought I _____ to attack the name of Jesus.”
Just like Christ predicted in John 16:2.
- v. 10, 11 “I imprisoned _____ (believers).”
“I agreed they should be _____.”
“I forced them to _____.”
“I pursued them to _____ cities.”

v. 12-18 His Conversion to Christ

This paragraph is Paul's major defense; in effect, he is saying:

“The risen Lord Jesus, the Messiah, confronted me, converted me, commissioned me to preach his name to both Jews and Greeks and the forgiveness of sins that is only in him.”

(OVER)

v. 19-23 His Obedience to Christ's Commission

- v. 19, 20 "I spoke the same message to _____ and to _____."
- v. 21 "For these causes, i.e., because of my testimony (conversion) and message, Jews _____ me in the temple and sought to _____ me."
- v. 22 "My message is consistent with _____ and the _____."
- "The _____ was to suffer"
 - "The Messiah was the _____ to rise from the dead"
 - "The resurrected Messiah was the _____ not only to Jews (the "people," KJV,) but also to _____."

26:24 Festus' Amazement

Festus is shocked that an educated man like Paul would believe that an unknown Jewish peasant like Jesus would have anything to say of importance to the Roman world!

"much learning" – note the reputation of Paul
"is making you _____"
"you are (lit.) OUT OF YOUR MIND"

Follow the Lord as did Paul and unbelievers may well say this of you! Does such judgment concern you?

26:25, 26 Paul's Courteous Reply to Festus

- v. 26** "THE KING _____ THESE THINGS"
"You, Festus, may be ignorant of Jesus of Nazareth; but King Agrippa is not."

"I SPEAK OF HISTORICAL FACTS FOR THIS THING WAS NOT DONE IN A CORNER!"

The Lesson: Christianity is not based upon subjectivity. The Gospel is objective; it is historical – it focuses on the objectivity of Jesus of Nazareth: CRUCIFIED, BURIED, RAISED FOR OUR SINS! No religion in the world has such an historical, objective message of salvation.

26:27-29 Paul Addresses King Herod Agrippa II

- v. 28** "almost" = "in a little," that is, "in a little, you are persuading one to become a Christian."
Question for Proper Interpretation: "In a little" what? Possibilities: 1) "in so few words," or 2) "in so little time." Regardless, King Agrippa was ALMOST persuaded! So near the mark, yet so short of salvation.
"Christian:" by Agrippa's time (59 AD) a name for believers commonly used by unbelievers (compare Acts 11:26).

26:30-32 The Verdict: Paul is Innocent

- v. 31** Festus: "this man has done nothing worthy of _____ or _____."
v. 32 Agrippa: "this man would be set _____ if he had not appealed to Caesar."

Long before Festus agreed to send Paul to Caesar, even before Paul made his appeal to Caesar, and even before King Agrippa got into the act, the risen Christ had said, "PAUL... YOU MUST BEAR WITNESS ALSO AT ROME (Acts 23:11)." Christ knows the end from the beginning! Trust him.