

Notes for Acts - Chapter 25b-26: Page 1 of 3

"Doing What God Called Paul (and us!) To Do"

Introduction - Paul's Witness to "Kings and Governors" is the fulfillment of prophecy

- God said to Ananias ""the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the (1) Gentiles and (2) their kings and (3) before the people of Israel. (Acts 9:15 NIV)
- The prophecy does *not* say how successful Paul would be in converting.
- So how was Paul "God's chosen instrument" if he didn't convert Kings and a majority of Jews?
 - God called Paul to be his "witness", as he calls us! Who actually converts is God's business!
 - We don't know how God is going to use us!

A Summary of Chapter 25: 13-27 and Chapter 26:

- Recap of Last Week:
 1. In Chapter 25, the *old* Roman Governor *Felix* is replaced by the *new* Governor *Festus*.
 2. Paul had been in jail for 2 years between his Roman trials.
 3. Paul "appeals to Caesar", which is a request to have his case before the Roman Emperor.
 4. Festus needed to know what charges to write/send along with Paul to Rome.
 5. Festus calls for a public hearing with King Herod proceeding as well as Festus.
 6. Herod is a "ceremonial king" with limited power who is an expert in Jewish laws/customs.
- Chapter 25 Verses 13-22: Governor Festus meets with Herod and discusses Paul's case.
- Chapter 25 Verses 23-27: Everybody enters a large amphitheatre; the charges are read out loud.
- Chapter 26 Verses 1-27: Paul makes his defense before Festus, Herod and the crowd.
 1. Verses 1-11 are Paul giving the "highlights" of his Jewish faith prior to conversion and his persecution of Christians.
 2. Verses 12-18 are Paul recounting his conversion story. This is the 3rd time it's told in Acts. Each time with different details revealed and/or omitted.
 3. Verses 19-23: Paul closes his arguments and gives the Gospel message.
 4. Verse 24: Festus interrupts the speech by saying in effect, "Paul, you are insane!
 5. Verses 25-27: Paul responds to Festus and gives his closing arguments
- Chapter 26 Verses 28-32: The speech is concluded. Neither ruler gets "saved" by this speech.
 - Agrippa's last statement ""This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.

Chapter 26, Verse 8: Paul asked: Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

- How does God raise from the dead?
- Remember the first verse of the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1 NIV). If you can handle the first verse, you can handle the rest of the Bible.
- If not, you're concept of God is too small!

Chapter 26, Verse 12: "It is hard for you to kick against the goads. What is a goad?"

- A "goad" is a spike object, often on the end of stick. It was used to get mules to move, the same way a cowboy has spurs. On chariots, they had goads behind the horses to prevent them from back-kicking the passenger.
- "To kick against the goads" is a painful thing for an animal. If the horse or mule is stubborn, and doesn't want to cooperate, the animal back kicks and "gets the goad".
- The Greek playwright Homer, prior to this event also used the expression "Kick against the goads". Jesus may have used this idiom as Paul was familiar with its meaning.

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Chapter 26 Verse 16: Jesus said to Paul: "I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you."

- Jesus said: "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. (Luke 12:48b NIV)
- "What has God appointed you to do and "what has/will God show you for your life?"

Chapter 26 Verse 17: Jesus said to Paul: "I will rescue you from (1) your own people and (2) from the Gentiles... I (Jesus) am sending you (Paul) to them."

- "(I have) been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked." (2 Corinthians 11:23-27, NIV)
- Paul's attitude toward all of this suffering: "What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ." (Philippians 3:8 NIV)

Chapter 26 Verse 18: Topical discussion about "History/Purpose of "The Church":

- In Ephesians Chapter 5, Paul lays out a discourse about how husbands and wives should treat each other. Then Paul ends this discourse with a strange verse: "This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:32 NIV)
 - Paul's point is that the ideal relationship between a husband and a wife is a "model" of the relationship between Christ and the church.
 - The word "Mystery" in the Greek implies: Something unrevealed up to now".
 - The concept of the church was not revealed, prophetically in the Old Testament.
- This leads us back to Verse 18: Paul was sent to the Gentiles "to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'
- The Gospel was supposed to be preached to the Jews First (See Matthew 10:5-7)
- After they corporately rejected Jesus, Jesus then turns to the Gentiles.
 - "And did they [Jews] understand that God would give his salvation to others [Gentiles] if they refused to take it? Yes, for even back in the time of Moses, God had said that he would make his people jealous and try to wake them up by giving his salvation to the foolish heathen nations." (Romans 10:19 The Living Bible)
 - God knows all things. He knew the Jews would corporately reject Jesus. This was part of God's redemptive "game-plan" to bring in the Christian church.
 - One day, God will *again* turn his focus back to the Jewish nation. (See Chapter 11 of Romans)
- Final Point: Why did God bother with all this?
 - (The Apostle John was speaking) "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4 NIV)"
 - God created you for the divine, everlasting, eternal purpose of showing how much he loves you!
 - A perfect God needed a perfect sacrifice (Jesus) so He can show his love to us for eternity!

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Chapter 26 Verse 19: Paul preached to 1) City of Damascus, 2) Jerusalem/Judea and 3) Gentiles.

- Paul said, "I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." (Galatians. 1:22-23)

Chapter 26 Verse 19 Part 2: Paul preached that: 1) they should repent, 2) turn to God and 3) prove their repentance by their deeds.

- Paul is saying in effect a Christian should "put their money where their mouth is"!
- Jesus said: "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock." (Matthew 7:22-24 NIV)

Chapter 26 Verse 21: Paul recounts how the Jews tried to kill them.

- Jesus said: "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you." (Gospel of John 15:18-19 NIV)

Chapter 26 Verse 23: Paul is saying "Moses & Prophets" declare the "Christ", i.e. Jesus, must 1) suffer, 2) rise from the dead 3) light to his own people *and* a light to the Gentiles.

1. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him (Jesus) and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life guilt offering, he will see his offspring (us!) and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. (Isaiah 53:10-11 NIV)
2. "Because you will not abandon me (David) to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One (Messiah) see decay". (Psalm 16:10, NIV)
3. "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people (Israel) and a light for the Gentiles." (Isaiah 42:6 NIV)

The theater in Caesarea where Paul preached to King Herod and Governor Festus:

As Excavated



It was remodeled and is in use today

