

ACTS CHAPTER TWENTY SIX

Read vs. 1-23

1. Paul told Agrippa that he was glad to stand trial before him because he considered Agrippa to be an expert _____ (vs. 1-3)

Paul had apparently been frustrated at having people preside over these hearings who didn't understand the case. He took hope in Agrippa. Agrippa was well acquainted with the Jewish laws and the Jewish people. Paul wouldn't have to start from point zero when he explained why he was in prison.

2. From vs. 5, it seems that Paul had trouble finding people to _____ for him.

Paul says that there were many people around who had known him for a long time and they could testify about his life both before and after salvation. Apparently they chose not to get involved with his trial.

3. Paul states that the Jews _____ for the very thing that he was on trial for. (vs. 6 & 7)

All Jews knew of the promise of a Messiah. Every Jewish girl hoped that she would be the mother of the Messiah. Moses had prophesied that God would send another prophet like him. (Deut. 18:15) David spoke of the Messiah in the Psalms. (2, 16, 45, 69, 89, 110 118 and others.) Isaiah spoke of the Messiah's suffering in chapter 53. Daniel chapter 9:25-27 speaks of the anointed one being "cut off." Zechariah 14 tells of the coming of the Lord to set up His kingdom on the earth. Paul says that the Jews are accusing him just because he is telling about the Messiah that they have all been waiting for.

4. What are some of the things that Paul previously did that he is now ashamed of? (vs. 9-11)

Paul says in I Cor. 15:9-11 that he was the least of all of the apostles because he had persecuted the church of God. But he also says that it was because of that that he worked harder than anyone else to preach the gospel. Paul knew that he was a miracle of grace. In Luke 7:47 Jesus says that the person who loves Him most is the person who has been forgiven for the most. Paul demonstrated that in His life and His ministry.

5. Notice in vs. 14 that God spoke to Paul in the _____ language.

Paul has explained what his life was like before his salvation. Now he tells what changed

him. He relates the story of his conversion on the road to Damascus and how Christ spoke to him. Jesus identified Himself with his children. Paul had never personally persecuted Christ and yet Christ says that he is doing that by persecuting the believers. We are one with Christ.

Jesus also said to Paul that it was hard for him to kick against the goads. A goad was a sharpened stick that was used to herd cattle. Only a stupid animal would kick against it and injure itself. Christ said that that was what Paul was acting like. Jesus had been trying to steer him toward salvation, but Paul was resisting Him and fighting Him.

6. What purpose did God give for appearing to Paul? (vs. 15-18)

Compare Acts 9:15. Notice that God told Ananias that Paul would be speaking to Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel. In the last few chapters, Paul has spoken to Claudius Lysias, Sanhedrin, Felix, Festus, and Agrippa and soon to Caesar. God's plans can never be thwarted! When Christ spoke to Paul on the road, He also promised to rescue him from the Jews and the Gentiles. God did not rescue him from every pain and persecution, but he had kept him alive in spite of all that had happened to him. Paul could look back on his life and see the pattern of God's protection and provision. He was confident that it would continue until he had completed the task that was assigned to him. Part of that assignment was to preach in Rome.

7. Paul says that he never preached anything different than what the prophets and Moses

_____ (vs. 22)

The prophets and Moses had indeed predicted the suffering Messiah and his sacrificial death. Why didn't the Jewish nation recognize the fulfillment of these things and turn to Christ? Compare Isaiah 53:1-5 The Jewish nation loved to hear about how the Messiah would come to rescue them and to rule in Jerusalem. They tended to gloss over the scriptures that talked about the suffering that would also come to their Messiah. Because of this, they weren't expecting their Messiah to be crucified. (See John 12:34) When Christ rode into Jerusalem on the colt (John 12:12-16) they were expecting Him to set up His kingdom on the earth right then. Those same Jews were soon shooting "crucify Him". (John 19:6 & 7)

8. What did Paul include in this gospel message? (vs. 23)

Why is the resurrection so important? It proved that Jesus was who He said He was. It proves that He had power over death. It proves that we can hope for life after death. If Christ was raised from the dead, then we will be also. Compare Ro. 8:11, I Cor. 6:14 and I Cor. 15:15-21

Read vs. 24-32

9. Festus accuses Paul of being _____. (vs. 24)

It is really Festus and Agrippa who are on trial here. What will they do with the Gospel? Whether they believe it or not doesn't change the fact that the Gospel is true. The Gospel wasn't on trial, but Festus and Agrippa sealed their own judgment by rejecting it. This is an illustration of I Cor. 1:18 which says that the preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. Becoming a believer and gaining eternal life is a spiritual work accomplished by the Holy Spirit. When God is calling a person to repentance, his eyes and his mind is opened, so that what seemed foolish before is suddenly understood as truth. There is no record of Festus or Agrippa or Bernice ever putting their faith in Christ.

10. What was Agrippa's reaction to Paul's speech? (vs. 28)

Perhaps Agrippa was feeling the heat of conviction. He tries to divert attention from himself by jokingly asking Paul if he thought he was going to convert him so easily. Paul's answer was gracious and showed genuine concern for the rulers. He is saddened by their hard hearts, knowing that they are not rejecting him, but God.

11. When Agrippa and Festus discussed Paul's case in private, they decided that

_____ (vs. 31 & 32)

Is this an unfortunate circumstance or a fulfillment of what God told Paul would happen? Agrippa and Festus didn't have any power over Paul's life. God was in control. It is an illustration of Romans 8:28...even things that seem to be bad are turned to the believers advantage. Paul was heading to Rome!