

Acts Chapter 26 Continued

Acts 26:16 "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;"

“For I have appeared unto thee for this purpose” (see 18:9-10; 22:17-21; 2 Cor.12:1-7; Gal. 1:11-12).

This was a dramatic call of Saul (Paul), to the ministry of God. Many people would say; why would God do this, knowing that Paul had been so aggressively against the Christians? Paul thought he was doing God a favor.

He was trying to follow God, he just didn't understand. God is patient and long-suffering, especially when He feels that we are doing the best we know how to do. God speaks to us in many ways. Sometimes it is an audible voice in our ear. Sometimes it is in a dream or a vision. Sometimes it is through his Word (Bible).

Sometimes He speaks to us through one of His prophets. Paul did not separate these ways out here, telling all of this to Agrippa. It doesn't matter anyhow. It is the voice of God, the Word.

Acts 26:17 "Delivering thee from the people, and [from] the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,"

“Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee”: Paul’s commissioning as the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13; 1 Tim. 2:7).

Abraham was acceptable to God, because of his great faith. Sanctified here, means made holy. The thing that makes them holy is because of their faith in Jesus Christ. God had never really been offered to the Gentiles. They were living in darkness, because they had never been offered the Light. Paul is to present this Light to them, which does away with all darkness.

Acts 26:18 "To open their eyes, [and] to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

“To open their eyes”: Unbelievers are blinded to spiritual truth by Satan (2 Cor. 4:4; 6:14; Matt. 15:14).

“Turn them from darkness to light”: Since unbelievers are in the darkness of their spiritual blindness, the Bible often uses light to picture salvation (verse 23; 13:47; Matt. 4:16; John 1:4-5, 7-9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5; 12:36; 2 Cor. 4:4; 6:14; Eph. 5:8, 14; Col. 1:12-13; 1 Thess. 5:5; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 John 1:7; 2:8-10).

“Forgiveness of sins”: This is the most significant result of salvation (see note on 2:38); 3:19; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; Matt. 1:21; 26:28; Luke 1:77; 24:47; 1 Cor. 15:3; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 8:12; 9:28; 10:12; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 2:1-2; 3:5; 4:10; Rev. 1:5).

“And inheritance”: The blessings believers will enjoy throughout eternity in heaven (20:32; Eph. 1:11, 14, 18; Col. 1:12; 3:24; Heb. 9:15).

“Sanctified by faith”: The Bible plainly and repeatedly teaches that salvation comes solely through faith apart from human works (13:39; 15:9; 16:31; John 3:14-17; 6:69; Rom. 3:21-28; 4:5; 5:1; 9:30; 10:9-11; Gal. 2:16; 3:11, 24; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 3:9).

The faith is in Jesus. Sanctified (set aside for Jesus), is the condition of the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was to bring this message to the Gentiles. Verse 17 promised that God would protect Paul from the Jews and Gentiles who opposed him.

Acts 26:19 "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:"

Paul says this in such a way that he is saying to Agrippa, how could I not follow through on this visitation from God the Son? I could not have experienced this heavenly visit without being changed by it.

Acts 26:20 "But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and [then] to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

“Works meet for repentance”: Genuine repentance is inseparably linked to a changed lifestyle (see notes on 2:38; Matt. 3:8; James 2:18).

Paul is giving a short description here of where he had witnessed this experience. Paul loved the Jewish people and he did not give up on them entirely ever, even though God had really called him to the Gentiles. It was the Jews who stoned him and tried to kill him over and over again. He would say he was giving up on them, but he really never did.

Acts 26:21 "For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill [me]."

“Jews ... went about to kill me” (see 21:27-32). The true reason in contrast to the lies of the Jewish leaders (24:6).

Paul does not go into detail here about why the Jews were after him.

Acts 26:22 "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:"

“The prophets and Moses” (see note on 24:14). The term “Moses” is used interchangeably with “law,” since he was the author of the Pentateuch, the 5 books of law.

Paul was never afraid to go anywhere, if he felt God had sent him. He knew that God was with him and would protect him. The Lord had spoken to him several times and had even told him not to fear, that he would still go to Rome and witness for Him there.

Paul knew that death was not immediate, because he has not yet visited Rome. The Old Testament prophets had prophesied the very same thing that Paul preached.

Acts 26:23 "That Christ should suffer, [and] that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."

“Christ should suffer ... rise from the dead”: Messiah’s suffering (Psalm 22; Isa. 53), and resurrection (Psalms 16:10; 13:30-37), the central themes of Paul’s preaching, are clearly taught in the Old Testament.

The suffering of Christ was to us-ward, that he might save us from our sin. Had Christ not suffered and His body died, then we could not have everlasting life. We will rise to life eternal, because our leader rose first. He is our Savior.

1 Corinthians 15:15- 23: "Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:" "And if Christ be not raised, your faith [is] vain; ye are yet in your sins." "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." "But now is Christ risen from the dead, [and] become the firstfruits of them that slept." "For since by man [came] death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead." "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

The light that shines is the hope of eternal life. This is to the Gentile, as well as the Jew.

Acts 26:24 "And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad."

“Learning doth make thee mad”: Festus was astonished that a learned scholar like Paul could actually believe that the dead would live again, something no intelligent Roman would accept. Unable to contain himself, he interrupted the proceedings, shouting that Paul’s tremendous learning had driven him insane (Mark 3:21; John 8:48, 52; 10:20).

This is just what happens always when the good news of the gospel is preached. By the foolishness of preaching, some men are saved. The world who does not accept Jesus as Savior thinks the minister who has brought the message is mad. Festus doesn't believe and says Paul is mad.

Acts 26:25 "But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

Paul here has to defend his sanity. Miracles of God, such as these Paul experienced are not believed by people who have never experienced miracles. They believe if it were real, it would have happened to them.

Acts 26:26 "For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner."

“None of these things are hidden from him”: The death of Jesus and the Christians’ claim that He rose from the dead were common knowledge in Palestine.

Agrippa was a Herod and his ancestry had given Jesus problems at his birth, trying to kill Him, and also, Herod killed John the Baptist, who was proclaiming Jesus. This Agrippa was a Roman, as well as a Jew, and knew well about the Nazarene name of Jesus.

Acts 26:27 "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

“Believest thou the prophets?” Paul’s shrewd question put Herod in a dilemma. If he affirmed his belief in the prophets, he would also have to admit that what they taught about Jesus’ death and resurrection was true, an admission that would make him appear foolish before his Roman friends. Yet to deny the prophets would outrage his Jewish subjects.

Paul has seen that something he said has touched Agrippa, and he believes.

Acts 26:28 "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

“Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian”: Agrippa was saying, “Do you think you can convince me to become a Christian in such a short time?” Recognizing his dilemma, Agrippa parried Paul’s question with one of his own.

“Agrippa” confesses that he is close to believing what “Paul” has proclaimed. But another interpretation is possible. “Almost”; (Greek en oligoi) can be translated “in a short time.” Understanding Agrippa’s words as a question the verse would read: “In a short time are you trying to persuade me to be a Christian?”

We see here, that Agrippa is convicted in his heart. He has believed what Paul has said. The Spirit of God is drawing Agrippa, and he is holding back. The word almost tells us that he does not humble himself and receive God. He is tempted, but does not quite bring himself to do this.

Acts 26:29 "And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

Paul is a true minister of God here. He wants everyone to be saved. He wants all to have the closeness of God that he has experienced. Of course, he does not want himself or anyone else to be in chains.

Verses 26:30-32: The hearing over, Agrippa and Festus met privately to discuss Paul's case. Both agreed that he was innocent of any crime and could be set free, had he not appealed to Caesar.

Acts 26:30-31 "And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:" "And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds."

This is the same opinion the chief captain in Jerusalem had, the same opinion Felix had, the same opinion Festus had before Agrippa came, and now the opinion of Agrippa and Bernice. Why do they not just let him go? In the next verse we see why.

Acts 26:32 "Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar."

Though Agrippa's comment certainly did not help Paul, it did have apologetic value for Luke in demonstrating Paul's innocence despite his years in prison.

Caesar would not like someone else deciding a case that had been turned over to him. The real reason of course, is that God wants Paul to witness in Rome of Him.

Acts Chapter 26 Continued Questions

1. Who was Paul telling Agrippa about?
2. For what purpose had Jesus appeared to Paul?
3. Who did God promise to deliver Paul from?
4. Verse 18, says to open their eyes and turn them from _____ unto _____.
5. How are believers sanctified?
6. In verse 19, Paul tells Agrippa that he was faithful to what?
7. Where are some of the places Paul ministered first?
8. What did Paul tell them to do?

9. Who caught Paul and tried to kill him?
10. Who protected Paul?
11. Who had previously said all that Paul was saying?
12. Why did Paul know for sure they would not kill him at this time?
13. Verse 23 said, Christ should _____ and _____ from the grave.
14. 1 Corinthians 15:17 says, if Christ be not raised, your _____ is in vain.
15. What is Christ called in 1 Corinthians 15:20?
16. As in Adam all ____, in Christ shall all be made _____.
17. What did Festus say much learning had done to Paul?
18. In verse 25, Paul said he was not mad but spoke what?
19. Why did Paul say he knew Agrippa knew these things?
20. What question did Paul ask Agrippa in verse 27?
21. What did Agrippa say Paul almost did?
22. Who did Paul say he wished could be like him except for his chains?
23. Who went aside to talk about Paul?
24. What verdict did they come up with about Paul?
25. Why did they not release Paul?