

## Zealous Towards God Part 1 of 3

### Acts 26

25 ends with Paul being brought before Agrippa and Bernice by Festus. Agrippa desires to hear Paul tell his story.

2<sup>nd</sup> time in Acts Paul tells it. Happened in 9, told in his defense in 22, retold to prick Agrippa's heart here in 26.

26-28 are grouped together in our study of the "ABCs of Acts" – Zealous Towards God

#### **1. Paul's Opening Remarks – 26:1-8**

- 1: most magnificent audience P had stood before
- 2,3: personal plea to Agrippa. Fortunate he understood situation & P [desired to convert]
- 4: Nation: Tarsus but also Jewish comm. 9:1
- 5: if all Jews [4] told truth instead of condemning P, they would let him go
- 6,7: doesn't address charges but insists he wouldn't mistreat Jews, disparage the Law, or defile the temple. *Accused by Jews of all people!*
- 8: you – plural – you people, y'all – addressing whole crowd momentarily

#### **2. Saul's Persecution & Conversion – 26:9-18**

- 9: P admits he had once been where they are
- 10: Saints – now realized they were innocent
- 11: lit: "I tried to force" – admitting he was sometimes unsuccessful. *Emotional past*
- 12-14: everything in P's upbringing was the Lord's prodding him to accept Jesus, Gal. 1:15
- Goads/pricks: pointed sticks 6-8ft farmers would use to prod ox pulling the plow
- 15: divine goad pierced his heart, scalpel that reshaped his life
- 16: minister – different than normal GK word – one who serves a higher will; witness allowed P to be an apostle [1:22-23]
- 17: P frequently rescued
- 18: P's mission was to open the eyes of the Jews & Gentiles alike

#### **3. Preaching the Resurrection – 26:19-23**

- 19: "How could I do otherwise?"
- 20: obedient to commands [baptized at once, 8:18, 22:16] and commission [preached]
- 21: A needed to know changing to Christianity wouldn't make an easy life

- 22: also needed to know the Lord's hand with him
- 23: next logical step: invitation/challenge

#### **4. Paul Challenges Agrippa – 26:24-27**

- 24: Festus [out of view] becomes agitated. Actions catch us off guard; statement doesn't
- 25: P answers calmly with respect. Insane before he obeyed, now in 'right mind' Mk. 5:15
- 26: Christianity no secret order. A's birth coincided with beginning of Jesus' ministry
- 27: if he said he didn't believe, lose credibility of Jews; if he did, next step was to obey

#### **5. Almost Persuaded – 26:28-29**

- 28: everyone waiting for his response!
- 2<sup>nd</sup> use of Christian in Acts [11:26; cf. 1 Pet. 4:16]. Wish we had the tone of his voice.
- "If you kept going, I would become a Christian."
- 29: all: incl. distinguished guests
- Paul's life defines what a Christian should be

#### **6. Next Stop: Rome – 26:30-32**

- 30: Agrippa thought he had said too much – abruptly stood up; interview over
- 31: unanimous verdict – a victory for Paul, but not the victory he desired.
- Festus still has no charge to put in his official letter
- 32: almost unbelievable: a Herod commending a follower of Jesus. What might've been?

#### **Lessons:**

1. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and **be ready always to give an answer** to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:" 1 Peter 3:15 [emp. JR]
2. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31
3. "Almost Persuaded" is to be completely lost!

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