

The Last Act Can Be A Game Changer!

Acts 26

Acts 26:1-11

Let the testimony begin....All players for the trial are present

- ***The Judge....Agrippa and Festus his counsel...***
- ***The Prosecuting Attorney...Tertullus***
- ***The witnesses against Paul...the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council***
- ***The Jury...Agrippa***
- ***The Defense Lawyer...Paul is his own lawyer***
- ***The Defense witnesses...Paul is the only witness...for himself***

The case against Paul was coming from the best of the Jewish lawyers and members of the Sanhedrin

Paul begins with words of affirmation

- ***Appreciation to Agrippa for his grasp on Jewish issues***
- ***Pleased to be able to address such a distinguished group***
- ***Delighted that Agrippa has such a long family association with the Jews***
- ***Requests patience to hear him out***

Paul gives his Jewish background

- ***Brought up a Jew in Tarsus and Jerusalem***
- ***He became a Pharisee and known for his strict adherence to the letter of the Law***
- ***All Pharisees live in the expectation of the resurrection***
- ***This was promised by God, generations ago***
- ***The whole nation is desperate to see it...why should it be so amazing if God raises the dead***

Paul actually was sympathetic to those who find it impossible to believe that Jesus is the one whom the resurrection power was demonstrated.

- ***He was a good Pharisee and did everything in his power to oppose the growing influence of the man from Nazareth***
- ***He was guilty of arresting and imprisoned the followers of this Nazarene***
- ***He even voted for their death***
- ***He went into other synagogues...throughout Judea...even further, in order to squelch the influence of this man.***
- ***Paul said that he understands their problem of not believing in this man***

Acts 26:12-23

Paul emphasizes his experience on the road to Damascus

- *Dramatic nature of the light and falling to the ground*
- *The calling of this Pharisee...and the revealing of who and why this event happened*
- *It was hard to realize that he was wrong about this man*
- *He had to be obedient to the vision...he knew it was a real...it was his calling*
- *He went about telling Jew and Gentile alike that repentance was the key to spiritual life...and that God's power would help them live a life in support of their repentance*

Paul states that his change and his teaching that Jesus is the way to life eternal...is why he stood in front of the King today.

Paul makes it clear that he:

- *Does not seek confrontation with the Jews*
- *Does not believe that his teaching deserves their sustained and dramatic opposition*

Acts 26:24-32

Agrippa and Festus's Response

- *First, Festus cannot believe God can raise someone from the dead.*
- *He can't believe that someone would put their life on the line for such an idea...only if one is out of his mind can anyone believe this.*
- *Paul knew that Agrippa knew the Old Testament material and had heard about the life and ministry of Jesus some 30 years earlier.*
- *Paul calls Agrippa to the test... asks the King if he believes the prophets...*
- *Agrippa was not about to admit that he believed the prophets...not in public anyway.*
- *Agrippa, Agrippa's sister and Festus all agree that "he may be a little crazy...but he certainly is not guilty of the charges brought against him*
- *Agrippa is now ready to help Festus with his report to Rome.*
- *They all agree that Paul is legally innocent and should be set free...but it would be risky politically.*
- *They realize that Paul's destination and determination is to get to Rome to present his case.*

Paul was not only determined...Paul knew his mission field was Rome, the Caesar...and all people he came in contact with in between.

Did Paul do his job...Did Paul fulfill his dream...Did Paul obey his heart?

Importance of Paul's Testimony...Chapter 26

A Perfect Summary of What Christ Does for Men (v. 17 and 18)

- *He opens their eyes...being able to see things he never saw before.*
- *He turns them from the darkness to the light...man walks toward darkness and gloom...like down the wrong way...until he meets Christ and he turns around and walks towards the light and his way is clear before him.*
- *He transfers him from the power of Satan to the power of God.*
- *He gives him forgiveness of sins and a share with the sanctified.*
For the past, the penalty of sin is broken; for the future, life is recreated and purified.

Summary of the Message Paul preached...verse 20

- *He called on men to repent...to change one's mind. Having sorrow for what we have done....and the resolve to be changed by the grace of God.*
- *He called on men to turn to God...from a God that means nothing to us to a God that means everything to us.*
- *He called on men to do deeds to match their repentance....having their deeds not just a reactionary force of someone whose life is governed now by a new series of laws...but, they are the result of a new love.*

Chapter 27

The last journey begins...on to Rome.

What do we see in Chapter 27?

Two (2) things must have lifted up Paul's heart on his journey to Rome:

- 1. The kindness of a stranger...Julius, the Roman Centurion, treated Paul with kindness and consideration...I say that one brave man recognized another.*
- 2. The devotion of Aristarchus...the Macedonian from Thessalonica (body guard)....the only way that he could have accompanied Paul to Rome was to list himself as Paul's slave...loyalty can go no further than that.*

The Peril of the Sea...and the trust of Paul in His God. Paul was probably the most experience traveler on the ship. It was a bad time to travel on the sea...After the Fast (Jewish Day of Atonement ...October or November).

Winter storms are bad.

The centurion listened to the Master of the Ship and the Owner... and they sailed with the prisoners (Should have listened to Paul).

Before the voyage and ship wreck was over, the centurion knew that Paul had the expertise and something that he did not understand...faith and a God that was on Paul's side.

It is said that they sailed on a corn ship (corn coming from Egypt to Rome)...the ships were 140' long...35' wide and about 33' from bottom of ship to deck.

During the most dreaded part of the storm, Paul took command (the prisoner became the captain).

Paul lifted their spirits...told them they would not perish.

Told them to eat... (They had not eaten in 14 days...saving their food supply)

Kept calm...used common sense instead of panic...

Paul was not "one of those people that were so heavenly minded that they were of no earthly use."

The Roman centurion kept the soldiers from killing the prisoners before they got off the ship to get to the island of Malta....

He literally understood that Paul had been right so many times on this voyage that it was up to him to make sure no one was harmed because a miracle had happened....and he was thankful for what Paul did in the face of a serious crisis.

Chapter 28

God protected Paul...and Paul's faith brought healing to others.

Paul was not a God....but God worked through him. Making all who saw the works of Paul feel that he was a God...or had a God that watched over him.

Paul gave glory to God everywhere he went...and he did it by the life that he lived.

The centurion and the soldiers head with the prisoners on another ship to their destination...Rome.

When they reached Rome, Paul had a welcome party greet him...Christians from 33 to 43 miles away (Apü Forum and Three Taverns).

Paul realized that he was not alone...there was

Luke...Aristarchus...and many from other cities...

What is this saying?

The Christian is never alone!

- *He has the consciousness of the unseen cloud of Witnesses around him and about him*
- *He has the consciousness of belonging to a world-wide fellowship*
- *He has Consciousness that wherever he goes there is God.*

- *He has the certainty that his Risen Lord is with him.*

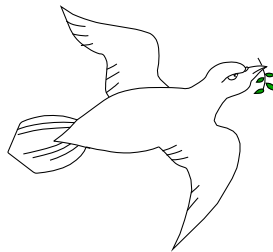
Paul preached Jesus...Some believed, others went on their way.

Paul welcomed all who came to see him....and he preached unhindered and with boldness the message of Jesus to all who would listen.

What do we have as a conclusion to Acts?

The message started in Jerusalem with the first few converts...now 30 years later, tens of thousands had come to know Jesus. From Jerusalem to Rome...the capital city of the world, the message had been proclaimed.

What is the message? “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8



“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”



Teach us Lord...to wait!