

Acts 26:1-32

January 11, 1977

Acts 26:1

Now Agrippa takes over. And I can understand this because Agrippa was a king, Festus was just a governor, and because he had him brought in front of the king, therefore the king took the liberty to tell Paul that he should speak.

“Stretched forth the hand” - had to be his right one because he was handcuffed with his left. Stretching forth the hand is the same as I would say, “ladies and gentlemen.”

Acts 26:2

“all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews” - in other words, the stuff they had said about him.

Acts 26:3

That was right, because King Agrippa II was well informed about all Jewish customs, Jewish laws, because he was one. His father had been very adamant about observing all the legalistic laws of Judaism. That's Herod Agrippa I.

Acts 26:4

“from my youth” - in other words; not older than 13 he showed up in Jerusalem with Gamaliel, and studied there

You see, I believe that Paul had the finest education money could buy. I think that he was just so minutely educated that he could honestly say that of all the men of his day nobody exceeded him. So if this is true, which I know it is, that he arrived in Jerusalem perhaps along toward the time when he was 13 and did his work over there and stayed there, he must have been there 15, 16, 17 years. I'm not saying he was in Jerusalem all the time, he could have gone back to Tarsus too, but he was in the process of education for all of those years. I believe he was a member of the Sanhedrin, when he cast his vote. I think that comes up in here someplace, doesn't it? Where he cast his vote, because he's going to tell about Damascus. Does it come up in here? (Yes) O.K. Remind me of it when we get there, in case I forget. I'll tell you how he did it. To be a member of the Sanhedrin, he had to be 30 or older, and he had to be married, and the father of a child. So this manner of life that he is talking about was absolutely known in the city of Jerusalem by both the Sadducees and Pharisees, these prominent men. That's why Herod Agrippa knew about it. You couldn't help but know Paul and his manner of life.

Acts 26:5

“if they would testify” – i.e. if they really spoke up

“I lived a Pharisee” - he really was a disciplined legalist.

Acts 26:6

The very things that the Jews believed in; the coming of the messiah, he now stands in judgment of. One time he believed in the coming but he was against the messiah, then Paul changed and he understood the messiah. Now the very people that used to slap him on the back want to kill him. That's why you can't ever put your faith in people, or your trust. I don't care

who they are. You can't do it. You got to put your believing in God and the integrity of the Word. People let you down. Yeah, one day they are nice to you, and the next day they cut your throat. It shouldn't be, but that's the history of mankind. It's really something.

Acts 26:7

"instantly serving" -always serving

"hope to come" -i.e. of the messiah's coming

Acts 26:8-9

He was a Pharisee in background, King Agrippa. His feelings were toward the Pharisees. I don't know if he was a Pharisee, but King Agrippa believed in the resurrection, the Sadducees did not.

"incredible with you, that God should raise the dead. Incredible" - incredible, that you should have any doubt about God raising the dead

"Jesus of Nazareth" - the one who's gonna be raised from the dead is Jesus of Nazareth. He isn't going to raise God from the dead. He's going to raise Jesus of Nazareth. So therefore Jesus of Nazareth cannot be God in these two verses.

Acts 26:10

"chief priests" - Golly, I forgot who's chief priest now. Ananias is no longer chief priest. Somebody else is chief priest at this time when Festus and King Agrippa II, I forgot his name.

"voice" – vote - An old ancient text reads, "I gave my pebble against them." That I understand, because all the voting was done with little pebbles. When they would sit, the Sanhedrin would sit in judgment, it was permitted by the chief priest, the high priest; giving authority, otherwise nobody talked. You just listened. When it was all over with, you didn't talk. If he was guilty, you took a black pebble, and threw it on the floor. If he was innocent, you'd take a white pebble, and throw it on the floor. Then they'd count the pebbles, and that was the way they voted. That's the vote. I think that translation "pebble" is absolutely beautiful.

Acts 26:11

"In every synagogue" - that's something, isn't it? That all these Christians who had previously been Jews, when they got converted, kept going right back to the synagogue. That's where he found them. Always went to the synagogue. Well, what did they go to the synagogue for? That was where their friends were. That was where they started witnessing. That's where they started holding forth God's Word; that's why they were found in the synagogue. Paul went in the synagogue to get them.

"compelled them to blaspheme" - in order to compel them he's going to have to whop them, beat them, rough them up, hit them with black-jacks

"mad" - the word "mad" here I think is the word for maniac. Is that right? Is there any reference in Bullinger for that word? Yeah, that's maniac, that's the word.

Did Paul think he was right? Was he sincere? Boy, don't you see how sincerity is no guarantee for truth? He really thought he was right. Now in no place in the Word does it say Paul was

possessed. Therefore somebody can be against you and God and His Word, and still not be possessed. Just meaner than the Devil, that's all. We know he's working for the Adversary; he's been influenced by the Adversary, like all the balls on the table; only the cue ball hit one but it splattered out all the rest; Walter's teaching, in "Dealing with the Adversary." Yet no place does it say that he was possessed.

He was just so right in his own mind about what he was doing he was like a maniac. Wanting to cause people to blaspheme, haling them out of those synagogues, binding them up, whopping them good, casting his pebble against them.

"strange cities" - foreign cities. He wasn't satisfied with his enthusiasm in Jerusalem. He went outside to foreign cities; strange cities. That's how he started toward Damascus.

Acts 26:12

Man, he had all the protocol. He had all the papers. He had all the rights, whatever it is, to arrest. He had all that with him.

Acts 26:13

"light from heaven" - and again I think it's the Shekinah glory

Acts 26:14

"speaking" - saying

"I heard a voice" - he heard the voice and understood what was said. The others only heard the voice, but didn't understand.

"and saying" - delete

"Hebrew" – Aramaic

"pricks" – goads - the reason a goad is called a prick, is because when the oxen were plowing. You see, the old Far Eastern plows have only one handle.

In America, on old plows we have two handles to plow fields with. The East has only one handle, so the man would hold the plow with the hand and the goad, the prick, with the other: that if the old bullock didn't do like he's supposed to, he gives him a shot. Today we have electric ones for it.

That prick that was pointed at the end, it was a stick that was pointed at the end, was called a goad. But they pricked them with it and that's why when the cow or bullock didn't move right or got out of line, he'd give him a good one. Then if the animal would kick against it, he'd hold it up there and let him kick on it. That's why it was the prick; goad. That's a beautiful illustration.

"It's hard for thee" - in other words, it isn't hard, what he was saying is, "you just hurt yourself kicking against the goad." Every time he kicked against it, he hurt himself.

Acts 26:15

"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" – right - in **verse 9** he says "contrary to the name of Jesus

of Nazareth.” When Paul, or Saul, was laying it on the Christian believers he was persecuting whom? Jesus. The same thing is true today. When they persecute you it isn’t you. It’s you, yes, in your body, but they’re really persecuting the Lord Jesus Christ, if you’re standing for the true God and His son.

Acts 26:16

“I will appear” - future tense

This is phenomenon, and absolute grace. You have to understand the Word to see why God would do this, because God looks on the heart and God knows the end of a man even before his beginning, because of his foreknowledge. Therefore God was able to do this and did it.

“to make thee a minister” - who does the “making of a minister?” God. Because he was an apostle and so forth; these are gifts given this way down. He does the making.

“a witness” - the greatest witness is speaking in tongues. The witnessing to the Word is also part of it, but it isn’t the greatness as it is according to **Acts 2:38ff**; speaking in tongues.

Acts 26:17-18

How is he going to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light? He said he’s going to make him a preacher and a witness. That’s the only way you turn people from darkness to light; somebody’s got to tell it. Somebody has to speak the truth and accuracy of God’s Word. They have to minister, they have to preach it.

What’s that word “minister” from **verse 16**, in the text in the Greek? Has anybody got the Greek on it? Spell it; *hupēretēs*. Literally that word means; the fine art of publicly expounding the scriptures. That’s what the word means. To minister is; to preach and to minister is; to present God’s Word. That’s why preaching, homiletically, is; the fine art of publicly expounding the scriptures.

“from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan” - So darkness has to be due to whom? Satan. So when Paul had darkness in his life, where was it from? Satan. I told you tonight, there are only basically two powers: either the Adversary, Satan; or the true God.

“forgiveness” - I don’t know, is forgiveness remission? (Yes) Okay. You see in remission, forgiveness is implied, but in forgiveness remission is not axiomatically implied.

“receive” – *lambanō* - manifest this remission. How are you going to manifest the remission? By changing your life from darkness to light, by holding forth the light, by walking in the light as God is the light, that’s how you manifest it.

“sanctified” – is the saints. That’s the Aramaic. The word “sanctified” is the word “saints” in Aramaic.

“that is” - delete

There it is. Boy, “I’m Jesus whom thou persecutest.” “To turn people from darkness to light”; and only by the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ always did the Father’s will. That’s why Jesus said “He who has seen me has seen the Father.” When we teach what Jesus Christ represents, what he did, who he is, what

he accomplished, what we are in him, that's how you turn people from darkness to light; from the power of Satan unto God.

"that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance" - that they may *lambanō* that remission, and *lambanō* the inheritance

Acts 26:19

Why is it, today, that they are so adamant against anybody saying that he had revelation, or that God talked to him? The spiritualists are saying it all the time. They are saying they're hearing voices. They're saying; all the time. There's that big article in Reader's Digest. You see, they don't mind talking about God talking to them. Boy, somebody sure has got their values all screwed up.

"vision" - this vision is the "T.V. show" revelation. The light was so bright he couldn't have seen it with his eyes open, so he had them closed, and he saw the whole thing. Heard the voice, saw it, you know, really something.

Acts 26:20

"works meet for repentance" - works indicative that they have repented - in other words; you just don't say, "Well, I'm a Christian," and live like the Devil; get all drunk when you're not a Christian, then you get to be a Christian, and you still go out and get drunk. That's a bunch of crap, bunch of baloney. You don't work for salvation, but because you are saved you work. And you do these works "meet" for repentance; proof of it, manifested proof. That's the witnessing of the inheritance among them that are saints.

Acts 26:21

"went about" - were about

Acts 26:22

"obtained help of God" - he got it

"small and great" - important and non-lettered people is what he means, because in front of King Agrippa, all the pomp and ceremony, all the dignitaries were there; so he shared the truth of God's Word there. Other people came, and he shared it with them.

Acts 26:23

"Christ" - Messiah

In order to have a resurrection, you still have to rise, but there's a fantastic difference between those who just rise and those who rise in the resurrection.

Acts 26:24

Festus interrupted. King Agrippa had given Paul permission to speak but Festus, the governor, interrupted. That's really something. Totally out of color, out of order, but he did. I think Festus got so shook over Paul's boldness and a lot of things Paul spoke that are not written in here and Festus said, "Paul, you're off your rocker. You're mad. You're beside yourself. You are insane."

"much learning doth make thee mad" - It isn't much learning that makes a man mad; it's the

much learning of the wrong stuff. The right stuff will never make you mad. It'll make you soberer than a judge. You can't ever learn too much of truth. You can learn too much of error, or learn the wrong stuff, or build the wrong stuff in your mind and it'll send you to the "hoosegow", or something.

Acts 26:25

"words of truth and soberness" - right-on stuff - that was a tremendous testimony

Acts 26:26

"the king knoweth of these things" - now he goes back to Agrippa

"not done in a corner" - with a blue light on, and can't see anything; wasn't hidden, it was done right out in public, because God raised him from the dead and those boys went to the open sepulchre and looked in and shook their heads and said, "I don't believe it". But he wasn't in the sepulchre. They had been there. It wasn't done in a corner; it was done wide open.

Acts 26:27

"I know that thou believest [the prophets]" - because he was a Jew. The Jews believed in the prophets.

Acts 26:28

That's the closest Paul got in two years of winning anybody, as far as the record is concerned.

What kept Agrippa from moving? It is the same thing that keeps anybody else; the desire to will to move. Agrippa knew Paul was right, but maybe his prestigious position, maybe his influence he thought he had, maybe a lot of other things like that; just a bunch of baloney. King Agrippa, that day, could have written the greatest record of any king of that time and he could have blessed people for centuries, if he would have said, "Paul, thou persuadest me to be a Christian." That would have been something. But instead he said, "Almost," and almost is "not at all."

Acts 26:29

"as I am, except these bonds [handcuffed]" - In other words; born again; filled with the spirit; convinced of Jesus Christ.

Acts 26:30

"The king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice" - the king stood up first, then the governor, then Bernice. That is protocol. When the king stood up; then the next in line, in protocol, would be the governor, then the king's sister, then they that were sitting with them.

Acts 26:31

"bonds" - handcuffs

Acts 26:32

That's a cop-out. Just because he appealed to Caesar, was no reason why Festus now could not have said to Paul, "Look, do you still want to go to Caesar, or do you want us to set you free?" Had Festus gone to Paul and said "We'll set you free," Paul would have said, "Okay, then I

don't want to go to see Caesar." But why did Festus, after his discussion with Agrippa, still not want to set Paul free? It's because he was still trying to please the Jews.

Tremendous record, isn't it? Well, only two more chapters to go. That's all we're going to do tonight.