

October 23, 2022

“God Raises the Dead”
Acts 26:1-32

Prel Rmks

LOGW

(1) Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: **(2)** "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, **(3)** especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently. **(4)** "My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. **(5)** They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. **(6)** And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. **(7)** To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. **(8)** Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead? **(9)** "Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. **(10)** This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. **(11)** And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities. **(12)** "While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, **(13)** at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and

those who journeyed with me. **(14)** And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' **(15)** So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. **(16)** But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. **(17)** I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, **(18)** to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.' **(19)** "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, **(20)** but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. **(21)** For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. **(22)** Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come— **(23)** that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles." **(24)** Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!" **(25)** But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. **(26)** For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. **(27)** King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe." **(28)** Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian." **(29)** And Paul said, "I would to God that not

only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains." **(30)** When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; **(31)** and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains." **(32)** Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

(Prayer)

INTRODUCTION

Trial – Felix “trembled” ... 24:27

Trial – Festus ... Paul appealed to Caesar ...
Jewish religious leaders could not prove their case against Paul

End of 25 – Agrippa and Bernice

King Agrippa 2

The great grandson Herod the Great – killed baby boys when Jesus was born

The son of Herod Agrippa 1

Chptr. 12 – The one who killed James

Chptr. 12 – He was struck by an angel and eaten by worms when he refused to give the glory to God when he was being worshipped as a God in Caesarea by the people of Tyre and Sidon.

Brother of Drusilla, the wife of Felix

He was the ruler over a small kingdom in the northeast of Israel:

Rome allowed him to retain the title of King – had some authority within his small regency

He also, by arrangement had authority over the Temple in Jerusalem

He was the one who appointed the High Priest

But he was actually subordinate to Festus

Bernice

Sister of Drusilla, the wife of Felix

Great scandal: Agrippa's sister – incestuous relationship

They came to give their greeting to the new governor. POLITICAL

Festus gave Agrippa a full briefing about Paul's case ...

Festus had created a problem for himself

25:22 – King Agrippa said he would like to hear Paul's case

Festus: tomorrow!

Invitations were sent out

25:23 – Pomp ... Show trial ... sport ...

Not a real trial, but a hearing

Festus opened the hearing at the end of 25

So we see Paul's third defense – Agrippa

I. His Opening Remarks 1-3

(1) Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: (2) "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, (3) especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.

Paul's Opening Remarks

II. His Former Life 4-11

(4) "My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. (5) They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. (6) And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. (7) To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews.

Promise of the Messiah – Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah

Promise of a Future Resurrection of the Dead

Job 19:25-27 For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; (26) And after my skin is

destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, (27)
Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and
not another. How my heart yearns within me!

(8) Why should it be thought **incredible** by you that God
raises the dead?

incredible – not credible – no credibility – something not
to be believed

(9) "Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things
contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. **(10)** This I also
did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison,
having received authority from the chief priests; and when
they were put to death, **I cast my vote against them**.

Same as 22:20 ~ Paul was not married: 1 Cor. 7:7

(11) And I punished them often in every synagogue and
compelled them to blaspheme; and **being exceedingly**
enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign
cities.

His Former Life –

He hated Jesus

He hated everything He stood for

He hated all of His followers

At one point in his younger days –

No one surpassed Paul in hatred for Christ

No one surpassed Paul in persecuting Christians

So, we see His former life

III. His Testimony of Conversion 12-18

Third time in the book of Acts ... 9, 22, Here ~ Why?

(12) "While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

(13) at midday, O king, along the road

I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me.

(14) And when we all had fallen to the ground,

I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language,

'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

(15) So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

(16) But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose,

to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.

(17) I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you,

(18) to open their eyes,

in order to turn them from darkness to light,

and from the power of Satan to God,

that they may receive forgiveness of sins and

an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

2 Corinthians 4:3-6 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, (4) whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (5) For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. (6) For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:13-14 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, (14) in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

That was the message God wanted Paul to deliver ... and He revealed this to him at the time of his conversion

Paul's Conversion

IV. His Life Since Conversion 19-23

(19) "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, = "to my calling"

(20) but

declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem,

and throughout all the region of Judea, and

then to the Gentiles,

that they should repent,

turn to God, and

do works befitting repentance.

(21) For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.

Because I was preaching and teaching the hope of the resurrection

Because I was preaching and teaching that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah – and He is alive

Because I was teaching that salvation is found in Him and the hope of the resurrection is found in Him!

(22) Therefore, having obtained help from God,

to this day I stand,

witnessing both to small and great,

saying no other things than those which the prophets
and Moses said would come—

(23) that the Christ would suffer,

that He would be the first to rise from the dead,

and would proclaim light to the Jewish people
and to the Gentiles."

This Was the End of Paul's Defense

How Would His Hearers Respond?

V. The Response of Festus 24-25

(24) Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!" **(25)** But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason.

This idea of the resurrection is crazy!

This idea that Jesus rose from the dead is crazy!

You Christians are crazy to believe something like that.

Festus represents those who have an intellectual problem with Christianity ... foolishness to them

God can and does save people who have intellectual problems with Christianity ...

VI. The Response of King Agrippa 26-29

Paul shifts the focus back to Agrippa

(26) For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. **(27) King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."** **(28)** Then Agrippa said to Paul, "**You almost persuade me to become a Christian.**"

Reformers

Knowledge
Assent
Trust

{trapeze artist in the circus}

Almost but lost ...

(29) And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains."

Paul's concern that day ...

VII. The Verdict 30-32

What was their verdict?

(30) When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; (31) and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains." (32) Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

Conclusion

There is a resurrection day coming for those who are physically dead. God raises those who are physically dead – the just and the unjust

But there is also another way that God raises the dead.

Jesus spoke about both in John 5.

John 5:21-29 For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. (22) For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, (23) that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. (24) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. (25) Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, **and now is**, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.

1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Do you have the Son of God in your life?

Are you alive in Christ?

Has God, spiritually speaking, raised you from the dead?