

Welcome to the Worship Celebration of



SIMPLY BIBLICAL | FAMILY INTEGRATED

Church – The Beginnings, Part 72
Paul & The Gospel on Trial – Part 2
Acts 25 & 26
03/18/2018



Last Week we looked at Paul & The Gospel on Trial – Part 1

Paul presented his testimony and the Gospel a few times

He emphasized the Truth, Righteousness, Self-Control, and the Judgment to Come which cause Felix to be afraid.

The Gospel presentation must include God's Holiness, Righteousness and our sinfulness – along with the solution → Christ's sacrificial Salvation for us.

Paul did not give up, even when it seemed he was being used for Felix's ulterior motives (wanting a bribe). We learned that when there are opportunities to share the Gospel – as long as the door is left open – we must/should pursue that open door with all that we are – for the Gospel's sake.

In our defense of ourselves – we must point to Christ as our reason for Hope.

This week we will look at Acts 25 & 26 – we will look at Paul's last "Big Opportunity" to share the Gospel (at least as recorded in Acts).

Paul & The Gospel on Trial – Part 2

Acts

Paul Appeals to Caesar

Now when Festus had come to the province, after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

² Then the high priest and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they petitioned him,

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³ asking a favor against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem—while they lay in ambush along the road to kill him.

⁴ But Festus answered that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself was going there shortly.

Acts 25:1–27 → Paul & The Gospel on Trial – Part 2

1. The Pleasing / Favor –

We see that Pilate, Felix and Festus ...

All wanted to “the Jews” a FAVOR → wanted to PLEASE them ...

Wishing to SATISFY the crowd, PILATE released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified. (Mark 15:15)

But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and FELIX, wanting to do the Jews a FAVOR, left Paul bound. (Acts 24:27)

But FESTUS, wanting to do the Jews a FAVOR, answered Paul and said, “Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things?” (Acts 25:9)

**Politicians, people, normal folk – all trying to please everyone ... BUT ONE
The one they should be seeking to Please → GOD**

Hebrews 11:6

Acts 25:1–27 → Paul & The Gospel on Trial – Part 2

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Hebrews 11:6 → But without faith it is impossible to PLEASE God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Biblical Faith has as its Only Aim → Pleasing God (not yourself)

So, we’ve seen everyone trying to please themselves, their own agendas, other “powerful” people – “you scratch my back – I’ll scratch yours...”, etc. ...

But, only Paul seems to be the one who is Seeking to Please God, alone.

Be like Paul – not those other folks

...though none go with me, still I will follow (follow Christ, alone)

Acts 25:1–27 → Paul & The Gospel on Trial – Part 2

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Hebrews 11:6 – Biblical, Salvational Faith seeks to Please God, alone.

So, Paul’s status goes from being a protected person in custody to save his life from an angry mob and committed assassins TO being “the Prisoner” in custody.

Festus tries hard to figure out what he should write to Caesar for Paul’s case to have “formal” charges – which Festus has already concluded are false and baseless. Politics are bondage when you are bound to folks you must do favors for – and to please – it is like a bottomless pit with lots of gravity.

Acts 26 → Paul’s Testimony – before Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice

Acts

Paul's Early Life

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

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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.

Acts 26:1–32 → Paul & The Gospel on Trial – Part 2

2. The Testimony Of Paul - before Festus, Agrippa, Bernice, and host of other folks, military people, local people, etc.

Paul's Testimony tells what we should:

- a) We need to tell about our sinful past – Before Christ – Paul was full of anger and persecution toward those that followed Jesus (Yeshua – The Way). Paul was the ringleader of those persecuting the church. Although he was very religious – he has some major anger issues. He was a part of a conspiracy to kidnap, torture, and kill Christians. Those who are NOT Born Again in Christ, those who are Not Saved in Christ – are LOST. No matter their up-brining (in church or not, etc.)**



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Isaiah 59:1-2 → Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear.

² But your INIQUITIES have SEPARATED you from your God; and your SINS have HIDDEN His face from you, so that He will NOT hear.

Proverbs 15:29 - The LORD is FAR from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.

Proverbs 28:9 - One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.

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Ephesians 2:1-3 → And you He made alive, who were DEAD in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR, the spirit who now works in the sons of DISOBEDIENCE, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by NATURE, CHILDREN OF WRATH, just as the others.

Before Christ – we were DEAD in our SINS – God's Wrath – the Sentence of God's Coming Judgment - was our Deadly Identity – outside of Christ

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Paul's Testimony tells what we should:

- b) We need to tell about the circumstances of our Salvation – when we got saved. It is a definite time in which we became Born Again in Christ. Before that moment we were lost sinners. “I once was lost, but now I am found, was blind, but now I see...” – John 3 → you must be born again. Paul had his Damascus Road Encounter with Christ – tell about yours.**

Paul's personal encounter with Christ was just as real or should have been just as real – in some way – as your personal Born Again Experience in Christ. That moment you were SAVED in Christ.

What were the circumstances leading up to that?

What was it like encountering Christ – in a real, personal way?

Explain this to those you are sharing the Gospel with.

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Paul's Testimony tells what we should:

- c) We need to tell about how it has been growing in Christ and Serving Christ since your Moment of becoming Born Again –**
“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.”

How has your “walk” been in Christ since Christ saved you? Not in a boasting manner or of competition, but of truth. Try to enumerate some sins Christ set you free of, or of new Passions for serving Him, and things like that. Explain how your life has changed.

2. The Testimony Of Paul - before Festus, Agrippa, Bernice, and host of other folks, military people, local people, etc.

Paul's Testimony tells what we should:

- d) We seek their Salvation – BUT we cannot make the decision for them
We are NOT Responsible for their Response, but we can encourage them in the right direction:

Acts 26:28-29 - 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.”

Paul's aim, as ours should be → to never give up, even after a response, until doors are shut. Encouraging folks to become Christians, just as we are. We are Seeking to Persuade via the Gospel of Christ.

BUT → we must leave the results to God, as frustrating as that may be.

3. The Paul's Great Commission from Christ -

How Paul's Missions is, also, our Mission

Acts 26:12-18 “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.”

3. The Paul's Great Commission from Christ - How Paul's Missions is, also, our Mission

When we share our personal Testimony of our Salvation and the Gospel of Jesus Christ → our Goal → our Aim is to (Acts 26:18) → 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 [Jesus Christ – Yeshua the Messiah].

Jesus said, “... I will build My church and the Gates of Hades (Hell) will not Prevail Against the Church ... And I am giving you Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven ...” (Matthew 16:16-19)

Lost sinners are bound in their sin to the lies of Satan, trapped in lives of living hell – Dead in their Trespasses and Sins (Eph. 2:1-3) – they Blinded by their Sin and Satan's lies – Only God's Truth – in Christ – can set the captives Free → John 8:31-32

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POWER of SATAN to GOD, that they may receive FORGIVENESS of SINS and an
inheritance among those who are sanctified by FAITH in [Jesus Christ – Yeshua the
Messiah]. (1 John 5:19 - ... and all the world is under the “sway” of the wicked one.)**

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lies – Only God's Truth – in Christ – can set the captives Free →**

**John 8:31-32 - Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide
in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and
the truth shall make you free.” We must Tell the Gospel Truth to the Lost**