

Man of Cross Paul the Apostle – Jews want him Dead – Rome Innocent?

Paul been held Prisoner over 2 years > Case Not taken Up > IGNORED!

TESTIMONY 3 X ch 9,22 > Life LENSE See Christ RISEN from Dead

Man of Crown Young King/Herod & Sister Bernice 25.23 “great pomp/FANTASIA...with military tribunes...prominent men of city”

Use Position of Power for Personal Power & Pleasurer: Seeking LIKES

Man of Caesar – Gov Porcius Festus of Judea – Representing Rome

Most NERVOUS – Wants KEEP Job, maybe HEAD > Answers to NERO

New GOV wants to be RID of this Prisoner > SOLVE Case > RELEASE!

Send Prisoner to Rome > No Exact Charges – needs to Get SPECIFICS

### Complete Opposite Views of Reality

v. 24 Festus to King Agrippa > “whole Jewish people petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer”

v. 25 Festus: “I found that he had done nothing deserving death - he himself appealed to the emperor - I decided to go ahead and send him”

v. 26 But I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore I brought him before you... King Agrippa...I may have something to write”

Different Strong Ideas > Division > Prejudice > Fear > Separation > Hate!

Economics > Politics > Sports > Religion > Denominations

Remedy? LISTEN – Stop Talking / Interrupting / Looking at PHONE

Ask Questions – Clarification – Comparison – Application – Conclusions

v. 27 “seems unreasonable – not indicate charges angst PRISONER!”

v. 1 Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself..."

### 1. Paul the Pharisee: Searching

v. 5 according to the *strictest sect of our religion*, I lived as a Pharisee.

Listeners Knew SAUL of Tarsus > Keen Student of Rabbi GAMALIEL

I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee.

Acts 23.6

I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

Galatians 1.14

## a. Truth of God: Revelation

Text Book of Jewish School > Torah – Studied, Memorized, Interpreted

v. 4 "The Jews all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem..."

Focus > Paul's Message to Jews > Rome already found NO Guilt in Him

**Commends AGRIPPA Knew** v. 3 all Jewish customs and controversies

Herod the Great had tried to destroy the infant Jesus. His son Antipas... beheaded John the Baptist... His grandson Agrippa slew James the son of Zebedee with the sword. Now we see Paul brought before Agrippa's son.  
R.B. Rackham

## b. Power of God: Resurrection

v. 8 Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises dead?

Where THAT come From? Luke SUMMARIZES Paul's Message

Goes to HEART of Issue – "If the resurrection did NOT happen, nothing else matters / If resurrection DID happen, nothing else matters!"

IF Jesus Rose from Dead > All SAYS & DOES has Ultimate Authority

1. BIRTH: Incarnation, Eternal God becomes MORTAL MAN – Baby
2. DEATH: God Man, SLAIN upon CROSS, Divine Punishment for SIN
3. RESURRECTION: Impossible for Death to Hold Him – Living ONE
4. PENTECOST: Exalted Jesus gives SPIRIT to Church – JESUS Comes!
5. RETURN: Jesus 'God-Man' will Return – Power, Glory, Visible!"

1807 Inventor Robert Fulton Launched 1<sup>st</sup> Steamboat, Hudson River, NY  
Crowd Gathered "Fulton's Folly" "It will Never Start, Never START....."

Engines Chugged – Belched Smoke – Launched Successfully

Crowd changed its Chant – "It will NEVER STOP, Never Stop...."

Power of God – Not always Majority Opinion – Always UNSTOPPABLE

IF God is TRULY GOD > There is NOTHING that He CANNOT DO!

## c. Plan of God: Redemption

vs. 6,7 ...my hope in what God has promised our fathers...promise our 12 tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night

Truth of God > HELD by JEWS / Power of God > Benefits JEWS / Plan of God > ONLY for the JEWS

Apostles Before Pentecost > Reveal their Jewish ETHNO-CENTRICITY

"Lord, are you at this time going to restore kingdom to Israel?" Acts 1.6

Nothing in Paul's Background or Thinking > Sympathetic to JESUS Way

## 2. Paul the Persecutor: Striving

v. 9 "I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And I did so in Jerusalem..."

a. Fury Thought PREACHERS of the WAY were LIARS > Jesus HOAX

9.1 Saul still breathing out murderous threats agnst disciples of the Lord

Breathing Out = **Angry Animal** > Even his BREATH is DANGEROUS

Deep ROOT of ANGER, BITTERNESS > RIPENED to MURDER

Religious ANGER Can Be Very TERRIFYING > Rages in World Today

I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man 1 Tim 1.13

Jesus: False Messiah Cursed by God > Messiah: Crown NOT CROSS

...Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews...

1 Corinthians 1.23

Paul's Reaction to Jesus and Followers > Full VENT of his ANGER

b. Frustration > Can't KILL MESSAGE – BLOOD Makes it SPREAD

vs. 10,11 ...I...locked up many saints in prison...when they were put to death I cast my vote agnst them...I persecuted them even to foreign cities

...a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem ...Those who had been scattered *preached the word wherever they went* Acts 8.1,4

Instead of DESTROYING the FAITH -- he DISPERSED the FAITH

NORTH – SOUTH – EAST –WEST > Kingdom of JESUS Advances

With Every NEW Follower > ANGRY Saul MORE FRUSTRATED

c. Futility > Paul's ARMS were too SHORT to BOX with GOD!

v 14,15 Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?...hard for you to kick angst goads. I asked, Who are U, Lord? I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting'

Surprise! Surprise! > DISCOVERED God's ENEMY > It is YOU!!

NOT Furthering Work of God > had been FIGHTING AGAINST IT!!

JESUS Is REAL DEAL >> FOLLOWERS are TRUE ISRAEL of GOD

In that moment, Paul made 2 surprising discoveries: Jesus of Nazareth was alive & He was so united to His people their suffering was His suffering! Paul was persecuting not only the church, but also his own Messiah!

Warren Wiersbe

PERSECUTION > NOT Sign of STRONG BELIEF > UNCERTAINTY

Killing People who Disagree > NOT Very Confident you're RIGHT!

Need to STRENGTHEN their POSITION by SILENCING their CRITICS

NO CONFIDENCE in OWN CONVICTIONS > REVEALS DOUBTS

### 3. Paul the Preacher: Servant

3<sup>rd</sup> Time Luke records Paul's Testimony > in JUST 28 Chapter Book

Significance of Paul > Leading Jewish Scholar >> Devoted Apostle

Defense of LIFE & MINISTRY > GOSPEL brings LIFE, DIE for IT

Importance of OUR Testimony > IRREFUTABLE, UNDENIABLE

Theology is DEBATABLE "Jesus is GOD" > Wide Area of CONFLICT

'Jesus CHANGED My Life' > We can SAY it >> People can SEE IT!

PAUL > Radical Change – Attacker to Apostle – Destroyer to Defender

v. 16 "...I have appeared to you to appoint you as *a servant and as a witness* of what you have seen of me and what I will show you..."

a. Discovered God > Long SPIRITUAL SEARCH Now COMPLETE

1) Power of God > Power of Jesus Knocked Paul Off Proud PEDESTAL

vs. 13-14 I saw light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground... / BRIGHT!!

Met Face to Face with All Powerful GOD: Name was Jesus of Nazareth

...our Lord Jesus Christ...God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. 1 Tim 6.14-16

Saw as Much of GOD as MAN CAN SEE and LIVE to TELL About It!

2) Truth of God v. 14 'It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

Proverb in BOTH > Classical GREEK and Ancient HEBREW

Impossible to FIGHT Against God > Cannot Change your DESTINY

TRUTH of God > FOUND it's CENTER in JESUS -

X in whom are hidden all treasures of wisdom & knowledge Coloss 2.2-3

3) Plan of God v. 23 "...proclaim light to his own people & to Gentiles"

Jesus will Reach ALL NATIONS > Irony 'Apostle to the GENTILES'

"to create in himself 1 new man out of the 2, thus making peace, and in this 1 body to reconcile both of them to God thru the cross"  
Ephesians 2.15

b. Declared the Gospel

The contrast between the dazzling garb of the high and mighty and the humble clothes of the chained prisoner suddenly become meaningless, for Paul displays the quiet dignity of a man with a message. Simon Kistemaker

1) See God's Truth > Unless God OPENS EYES we CANNOT See

v17 I am sending U to open eyes, so they might turn from darkness 2 light

ENEMY of TRUTH wants to KEEP US from GOD of TRUTH --

god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.  
2 Cor 4.4

DARES to OPEN God's Word! Ask Him for LIGHT & SEE!

## 2) Set free from Satan's Grip > Spiritual Enemy of our Souls

vs. 17,18 I am sending you to... turn them...from power of Satan to God

BREAK the Grip of the PRINCE of DARKNESS, FATHER of LIES

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.... John 10.10

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1.13-14

## 3) Saved from Sin's Penalty > JUSTICE of CROSS, SIN Paid in FULL

v. 18 "that they may receive forgiveness of sins by faith in me"

v. 20 "that they should repent and turn to God...deeds of repentance"

NOT JUST WORDS > SIGN of True Forgiveness in NEW OBEDIENCE

SALVATION is by FAITH > But it is SEEN in OUR GOOD WORKS

## 4) Secure in God's Presence > Gospel NOT Just NEGATIVE

v. 18 'a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

New life in X & new community of X always go together. John Stott

## 5) Spoken to All People > All NEED Him, All WELCOME to Come

vs. 19,20 "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision from heaven...first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached..."

v. 22,29 "I stand here testifying both to small and great alike...I pray to God for all who are listening to me today may become what I am"

v. 24 FESTUS > "Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind." 25 But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. 26 For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe."

Paul > Personal Question about Agrippa's SOUL > What about Jesus?

AGRIPPA's RESPONSE about POLITICAL SURVIVAL

Believe Prophets > Cannot say 'NO' – Calls Self KING of the JEWS

Not say 'YES' Paul making Clear > Jesus fulfills Ancient Prophecies

Agrippa Side-Steps Confrontation > Regal, Non-Committal Humor

v. 28 And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?"

Agrippa rejects GOSPEL > Paul is CUTE! Odd Man, Funny Story!

v. 30 Then the king rose, and the governor and Bernice and those who were sitting with them

Standing of King > Abrupt END of the MEETING > ALL STOOD

END Opportunity to Learn from CHIEF EXPONENT of FAITH

END Time to Consider Standing before GOD > Find Mercy of CROSS

What Agrippa and Festus did not understand was that *Paul* had been the judge and *they* had been on trial. They had been shown the light and the way to freedom, but they had deliberately closed their eyes and returned to their sins...The trial was over, but their sentence was still to come; and come it would. Warren Wiersbe

The Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."  
Acts 23.11

Paul replied, "Short time or long - *I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am*, except for these chains"  
Acts 26.29

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Congregational Prayer Psalm 57

Be merciful to me, O God, / **be merciful to me,**

for in you my soul takes refuge; / **in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by.**

I cry out to God Most High, / **to God who fulfills his purpose for me.**

He will send from heaven and save me; / **he will put to shame him who tramples on me.**

God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness! **My soul is in the midst of lions; I lie down amid fiery beasts** - the children of man, whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords.

**Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!** / Let your glory be over all the earth!

**They set a net for my steps; my soul was bowed down.** They dug a pit in my way, but they have fallen into it themselves.

**Ask the Lord for His peace. Deliverance for your enemies.  
Forgiveness in your heart. Remembering His Glory.**

My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast! / **I will sing and make melody!**

Awake, my glory! Awake, O harp and lyre! / **I will awake the dawn! I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples;**

I will sing praises to you among the nations. For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

**Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!**