

Acts # 96 “From Darkness to Light, from the Power of Satan to God” Acts 26:6-32

Because of his unwavering stance on his Savior and His Gospel along with his commitment to truth and the facts of his case, the Apostle Paul continues to irritate every Roman official he’s brought before and frankly, they just don’t know what to do with him and so, like the proverbial hot potato, Paul keeps getting bounced from one to another, from governor to governor to a king and finally to Caesar himself.

We find ourselves in our story where Festus is beside himself because by the very Roman law that he has lived by and enforced quite successfully for many years, he has the duty and responsibility to send Paul to Emperor Nero to defend himself as to the Sanhedrin’s charges in the Roman high court.

But Festus has no clue as to how he’s going to sell his take on Paul’s case because all the politically-based charges are unfounded and he clearly knows it, so he must come up with something else.

And now Paul’s not going to refute these accusations against him because he was adjudicated not guilty at his previous trial for the same charges; instead he is going to answer this time the best way he knows how and that will be by his testimony from the heart.

Because Paul, like his Savior is in love with his Father God, he shares the very happiness of God everywhere he goes to include the intense pressure of a courtroom trial where most of those attending not only want him declared guilty and sentenced but also want him dead and yet, he’s so relaxed, remaining courteous and poised in spite of these immense challenges.

Paul has gone from a commended member of the Pharisees in high standing to a condemned man in the eyes of the Pharisees who must be eradicated.

So, the difference between commendation and condemnation for Paul is that as Saul of Tarsus by his own proclamation was an extremely religious person and at the same time, the worst sinner that ever lived even with his long list of commendable achievements in tremendous contrast to Paul, the grace believer who is completely relying on Jesus Christ’s achievements alone for his justification and sanctification.

Paul’s countrymen, the Jews have not only passively rejected his message but they also have actively refused to objectively evaluate his God-ordained ministry by suppressing the obvious truth set before them and then they took it to another level by becoming actively antagonistic toward him to the extent of wanting to murder him thus stopping his effectiveness.

Paul’s hope is related to Jewish theology but not the way these people understood the issue so, Paul makes it real by causing them to consider their self-righteous religion versus the truth of God’s grace plan for Israel.

Any one of the Jews in the courtroom could testify of Paul’s Pharisaic achievements or that he was raised according to the strictest policies of Judaism and that he has not deviated from Judaism’s core tenets when understood and applied correctly.

Paul is still a solid Jew who has simply found the Messiah that his fellow Jews were looking for according to the promises made by God to their ancestors.

Serving earnestly means the Sanhedrin is still performing ritual animal sacrifices which at this time is expressing their rejection of the cross of Christ.

Approximately 30 years after the cross, humble Paul is still testifying of the glory of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice and the Sanhedrin with its sanctimonious priests are still blaspheming because they’re still

offering animal sacrifices and thus, arrogantly substituting their value system for God's.

Prior to the cross, animal sacrifices were an expression of faith as a way of communicating biblical truth in the Old Testament but now they are an expression of a negative reaction to God's grace and truth.

Paul focuses on the biblical issue and this is not a simple theological dispute; it's all about the promises of God to their ancestors and Herod would've understood being a student of Judaism.

So, Paul's emphasis in referring to God's covenant promise to Abraham was that he would live in the promised land that God had given him, a promise yet to be fulfilled indicating that Abraham would have to be resurrected and then God's promise will be fulfilled.

This is the hope Paul spoke of that Israel had been given that there would be a future time designated by God when all Jews would be in the promised land, a promise given to the 12 tribes.

Because Paul knows that the truth can hurt and the truth must take precedence over an emotional sentimental relationship with people, he's letting his fellow Israelites know that they are involved in blasphemy simply because they've rejected God's grace by remaining religious and therefore, Paul is going to let the chips fall where they may.

And because they are constantly religious, they've naturally become legalistic, demonstrating that they are completely in negative reaction toward biblical truth.

Paul is pointing out that he was just like they are now; in the same position as these blasphemous Jews because he once was vehemently opposed to Christianity.

Opponents of Christianity would attach Jesus to Nazareth to indicate that He couldn't be the son of David because the son of David had to come from Bethlehem.

The Light knocks Paul to the ground and knows Saul personally (from eternity past to be exact) and Saul's never persecuted someone who can knock him off his feet, blind him in a second and make him pay attention like this before.

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The Lord has commissioned Paul to be an apostle to the Gentiles but that doesn't mean he'll no longer have a ministry to Jews but his primary focus is to Gentiles and his defined objective of duty for his life after salvation is to open unbeliever's eyes by presenting to them that which enlightens the soul.

Paul is going to open their eyes with valuable information by declaring the Gospel to them.

And he's NOT going to pry their eyes open; he's just present the Light of the Gospel and it will enter their souls.

And as a common result, they'll respond to the Gospel and go from the lost status of darkness to the saved status of Light, a reference to Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.

When someone believes in Jesus Christ by expressing faith alone in Him alone, something immediately precedes or is simultaneous with it and that is a change of thinking.

So, repentance in salvation is a change of attitude toward Jesus Christ, prior to or during the expression of faith; it's a new attitude brought about by the Holy Spirit who ultimately provides the information which causes the change in attitude.

After salvation, the logical result of a grace salvation is grace production and grace production calls for the elimination of human good and the addition of divine good.

And remember just as God provided salvation, He will provide the means and the power to produce divine good.

When truth is clearly presented the world's pseudo-courtesy is removed and this rudeness is designed to cut Paul off at that moment.

The phrase great learning is an attack on Paul's Bible knowledge from his obvious study used here as a name-calling device known as an ad homonym attack used against anyone who studies and applies the Word of God consistently.

King Agrippa then fades away as the last of the Herods but Paul's words recorded in Scripture live forever.
There is no substitute for being in Christ; no amount of wealth or worldly power can be compared with the freedom, power and inner happiness we have in Jesus Christ.