

Journey Through Acts
“Affirmed To Be Alive”
Acts 25:1-27

Introduction:

1. What Are The Central Truths:
 - Of The Gospel?
 - If Someone Were To Ask You This:
 - How Would You Answer?
 - Another Way To Put This Is:
 - What Makes A Christian:
 - A Christian?
2. The Apostle Paul Provided:
 - A Good Summary Of Those Gospel Truths:
 - In 1 Corinthians 15:3-5:
 - In Which He Says - “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; / And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: / And that he was seen!”
 - We See From These Verses That:
 - The Central Truths Of The Gospel Are:
 - Jesus’ Life, Jesus’ Death, And Jesus’ Resurrection!
3. But - The One Truth:
 - That Makes The Christian Faith:
 - Stand Out From All Other:
 - False Religions & Faiths:
 - Is The Truth About:
 - Jesus’ Resurrection!
 - Because - As Paul Would Later Say:
 - In 1 Corinthians 15:13-14:
 - “But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: / And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain!”
 - You See - The Founders Of Other Faiths:
 - Have Lived & Have Died!
 - But None Have Either Claimed Or Confirmed Their Resurrection From The Dead!
 - This Is Only True:
 - Of Jesus Christ!
 - Because - The **Claim** Of His Resurrection:
 - In 15:4 - Has Been **Confirmed** And Backed Up:
 - By The Eyewitness Testimony Of Hundreds Of Witnesses To His Resurrection!
 - As Paul Wrote Back In:
 - 15:5-8 - “And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: / After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. / After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. / And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time!”
4. And The Central Truth:
 - Of The Resurrection Of Jesus:
 - Became Well-Known Across:
 - The Roman Empire - Through The Missionary Enterprises Of Those Same Eyewitnesses!
 - Including Peter & Paul & Others!
 - In Fact - In Acts 25:
 - Where We Will Be For The Rest Of Our Service Tonight:
 - Even The New Roman Prefect:
 - Who We First Met In 24:27:
 - Porcius Festus - Recognized That The Resurrection Of Jesus:
 - Was A Central Doctrine To The Apostle Paul’s Faith!
 - And We See This In:
 - 25:19 - When Festus Describes For His Guests Of Honor:

- King Agrippa & His Sister, Bernice:
 - That The Jews - "Had certain questions against him – Against Paul – of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive!"

5. You See - For Paul:

- The Resurrection Of Jesus:
 - Was Central - Not Only For His Faith:
 - But For His Entire Life:
 - Ever Since Jesus Met Him On The Road To Damascus, Some 20 Years Before!
- Paul "Affirmed" Jesus "To Be Alive":
 - Because He Had Seen His Glory!
 - He Had Heard His Voice!
 - And He Experienced His Power!
 - And So Had Everyone Else, Who Had Been Touched By The Reach Of Paul!
- And So - Now:
 - As We Continue Our *Journey Through Acts*:
 - Everything That Happens To Paul In This Chapter:
 - Happens To Him In The Light:
 - Of This Truth That He Affirmed!
 - That This "One Jesus, Which Was Dead" - Was & Is - "Alive!"

* So - As We See From The First 5 Verses Of Acts 25 - There Is:

1. **A Renewed Indignation:**

- Because Paul Affirmed Jesus To Be Alive!
 - A Renewed Indignation:
 - By The Jews!
 - 25:1-5 - "Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem. / 2 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him, / 3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him. / 4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither. / 5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him!"
 - Now - We Need To Remember That Paul:
 - Was In Prison In The **City Of Caesarea**:
 - For Two Years - Before Festus Comes On The Scene!
 - For Two Years - Paul Was Left "Bound" (24:27)!
 - But - When Festus Replaced Felix:
 - And Went To Jerusalem:
 - One Of His First Official Acts As Governor:
 - Was To Meet The New High Priest!
 - So - Even Though There Was A New Governor:
 - And A New High Priest:
 - The Jews Had The Same Old Hatred!
 - For Two Years:
 - Their Bitterness Toward Paul Had Festered!
 - And The Primary Issue The Jews Wanted Festus To Deal With:
 - Was The "Paul Problem!"
 - And They Were Willing - Once Again:
 - To Do Whatever It Took:
 - To Get Rid Of Paul:
 - And His Message About:
 - A Risen & A Living Savior!
 - And We Can See From This:
 - That A Living Jesus:
 - Is A Constant Threat To Sinners!
 - Because It Is Before A Living Jesus That "Every Knee Shall Bow" And Give An Account To!
 - But This Renewed Indignation:
 - By The Jews - Then Led To:

2.

A Renewed Injustice:

- Also Because Paul Affirmed Jesus To Be Alive!

- A Renewed Injustice:

- By The Roman Authorities!

- 25:6-12 - "And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought. / 7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove. / 8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all. / 9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? / 10 Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. / 11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar. / 12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go!"

- At First - Festus Seems To Be:

- A Fairly Reasonable Roman Official:

- Who Understood The Basic Principles:

- Of Fairness & Justice!

- He Understood That:

- A Prisoner Should Be Able:

- Confront His Accusers:

- And Defend Himself Before An Impartial Judge!

- And - It Is Clear From What We Just Read:

- That Paul Was Able To Defend Himself:

- Well! 25:8 - "While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all!"

- So - Paul Continued To Keep:

- His Conscience "Void Of Offence Toward God, And Toward Men!" (24:16)

- But - Like His Predecessor:

- Festus Had The Same Weakness As Felix!

- Using The Same Words As In 24:27:

- Here - In 25:9 - Festus Too:

- Was "Willing To Do The Jews A Pleasure!"

- But Paul Knew:

- That If He Went To Jerusalem Again:

- For Another Trial In A Kangaroo Court:

- There Would Be No Justice!

- And This Is Why Paul - Who Knew His Rights:

- As A Roman Citizen - Exercised His Right:

- Of Final Appeal - Unto The Roman Emperor Himself!

- It's A Sad Thing To Think That Paul Believed He Could Receive Fairer Treatment In The Courts Of Emperor Nero:

- Than In The Courts Of God's Own People!

- "Paul Expected Fairer Treatment From A Heathen Emperor Than From The Supreme Council Of The Jews; And Was Willing To Submit His Case Rather To Nero Than To The High Priest!" (John Dick)

- And So - At This Point - Portius Festus:

- Had No Other Choice!

- 25:12 - "Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go!"

- And In Doing So - Once Again - The Mighty Roman Empire Became - In The Words Of John Dick:

- "The Unconscious Instrument Of The Divine And Wonder-Working Providence!"

- We See From This That:

- A Living Jesus:

- Is What Will Cause You To Live Your Life Also With A Conscience "Void Of Offence Toward God, And Toward Men!" (24:16)

- And That - Even If You Are Faced With Injustice:

- You Can Be Content With The Will Of The Lord!

- As Peter Wrote - In 1 Peter 3:16 - "Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ!"

- But Then - This Renewed Injustice:
 - By Festus - Led To:

3. *A Renewed Investigation!*

- All Because Paul Believed & Affirmed Jesus To Be Alive!

- A Renewed Investigation:

- By His Own Country-Men:

- Who Should Have Known Better!

- In - 25:13-22 - "And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus. / 14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: / 15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him. / 16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. / 17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth. / 18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed: / 19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. / 20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters. / 21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar. / 22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him!"

- Festus Had A Problem!

- His Problem Was Not About Paul's Charges!

- Because He Understood Them Clearly!

- That They Were - 25:19 - "Questions Against Him Of Their Own Superstition!"

- His Problem Was Not About Paul's Claims!

- Because He Understood Them As Well!

- They Were About "One Jesus, Which Was Dead, Whom Paul Affirmed To Be Alive!" (25:19)

- Festus Problem Was:

- What To Tell His Superiors In Rome:

- About Paul - When He Got There:

- To Be Tried By The Emperor?

- However, It Was A Problem:

- Of His Own Making!

- If Festus Had Been Committed To Justice:

- And Not To His Own Political Interests:

- The Case Would Have Been Dropped! Paul Would Have Been Freed!

And The Emperor Would Not Have Been Involved!

- But Now - The Frivolous Case Had To Move Forward:

- Because Paul "Appealed Unto Caesar!"

- And Festus Had To Do Something:

- To Save Face, His Career, And Perhaps Even His Life!

- And Since Agrippa & Bernice Where There:

- He Thought They Might Be Able To Help Him Out:

- Of His Predicament!

- And So Begins Another Investigation! It Is Not A Trial! No Judgment Can Be Made!

- But - As We Will See In Acts 26, Paul Will Once Again Make The Most Of His Opportunities!

- We See From This That:

- A Living Jesus:

- Will Give You Courage & Hope:

- To Face Whatever Comes Your Way!

- Though It May Seem Like, At Times:

- Your Life Is In The Hands Of Others:

- In Reality - Your Life & Your Times Are Still In God's Hands:
- No Matter What!
- And You, Like Paul:
 - Can Still Make The Most Of Your Opportunities:
 - For The Lord!
- But This Renewed Investigation:
 - Led To:

4. *A Renewed Innocence!*

- Because Paul Still Affirmed Jesus To Be Alive!
 - A Renewed Innocence:
 - That Was Confirmed By Festus Himself! Because:
 - In 25:23-27 - "And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth. / 24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. / 25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him. / 26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write. / 27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him!"
 - In 25:25 - Festus Confirms:
 - What He Knew To Be True:
 - About The Charges & Claims:
 - Of Paul! He Was Innocent!
 - "He Had Committed Nothing Worthy Of Death!"
 - And So - He Had Nothing Worthy:
 - Of Another Trial!

Conclusion:

1. So - What Was The Cause:
 - Of All That Took Place In This Chapter:
 - To The Apostle Paul?
 - The Cause Of It All Was Because:
 - Paul Believed & Affirmed That Jesus Christ Was Alive!
 - As G. Campbell Morgan Once Wrote:
 - "Lift The Resurrection Out Of This Chapter, And Out Of This Book, And Out Of The History Of The Centuries, And What Remains? The Cross Is Left; But the Cross Without The Resurrection Has No Meaning, And No Power! [Because] The Real Force Of The Gospel Of Christianity Is The Absolute Certainty In The Souls Of Men That [Jesus] Is Alive!"
2. Do You Believe & Affirm This To Be True:
 - In Your Own Heart Tonight?
 - If So - Then You Are Ready:
 - For Any Indignation Against You!
 - As Well As Any Injustice & Any Investigation!
 - Because You Are Holding Onto The Promise:
 - Of The Living Jesus Himself!
 - That - "Because I Live, Ye Shall Live Also!" (John 14:19)

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