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Series: Acts

Title: Paul's Confession

Text: Acts 24: 1-23

Date: June 24, 2010

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Acts 24: 1: And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

Inciting an ignorant mob didn't work, the council of religious leaders couldn't achieve the goal, an assignation attempt didn't work, so now, in comes, perhaps the worst weapon the enemy possesses--oratory! His ammunition was flattery!

Acts 24: 2: And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, 3: We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. 4: Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.

He exalts Felix--deifies Felix--"by thee we enjoy great quietness." He makes Felix the author of goodness to them. Calls him 'most noble Felix'

Acts 24: 5: For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: 6: Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. 7: But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, 8: Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.

He leaves out the fact that they were throwing dust in the air looking for stones to stone Paul to death. He leaves out that the council could not even agree with each other, much less what to do with Paul. He surely mentions nothing of the assassination plot that the prosecutors were privy to.

Acts 24: 9: And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

Application: Beware of flattery (Read Psalm 12)

Psalm 55: 21: *The words* of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war *was* in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet *were* they drawn swords.

Pr 26:28:...a flattering mouth worketh ruin....29:5: A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.

Jude 1:16: These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

Acts 24: 10: Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

1. Paul does not flatter Felix. Do you flatter an enemy of God? Do you give highly esteem a man's person when he is an unrighteous judge? No.

2. Paul gives him honor because of his office, not because of his person, but because God put Felix where he is.

3. Paul reminds Felix of his responsibility to law and justice--Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself: (Read Romans 13: 1-5.)

Acts 24: 11: Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. 12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: 13: Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me....17: Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. 18: Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult. 19: Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me. 20: Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council, 21: Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

Paul is a witness of Christ so he bears witness of God. The Lord said, Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. (Mt 10: 32.)

Acts 24: 14: But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: 15: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. 16: And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

I. CHRIST JESUS IS THE WAY GOD'S SAINTS WORSHIP GOD

A. Christ is the Door

John 10:1: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber....7: Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

B. Christ Jesus is our Access to God and acceptance by his grace

Romans 5: 1:...by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Eph 2:18: For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Heb 10:19: Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20: By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

II. CHRIST JESUS IS THE WAY OUR FATHER'S WORSHIPPED GOD

Acts 24: 14:...after the Way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers,...

A. Not temporal fathers, but spiritual fathers.

John 8:56: Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

Galatians 3:7: Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 8: And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. 9: So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

1 Corinthians 10: 1: Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2: And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3: And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4: And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ....**9: Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.**

B. It has always been the case since the beginning that "no man cometh to the Father but by the Christ of God"

1. Abel's lamb was Christ the Lord--Cain was rejected
2. Noah's ark was Christ the Lord--those outside were rejected
3. The lamb God provided to die in Isaac's place was Christ the Lord.
4. Jacob's ladder to God was Christ the Lord.

III. CHRIST JESUS IS THE WAY SPOKEN OF IN THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

Acts 24: 14: But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

Joh 5:39: Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Luke 24:27: And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Romans 1: 1: Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2: (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3: Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4: And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

B. Because Christ is the end of the law and the fulfillment of the prophets he began his ministry reading from the book of Isaiah and then he said, Luke 4: 21:...**"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."**

1. Over over we read, he did such and such--**that the scriptures might be fulfilled**
2. It is why he said: Mt 5:17: **Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.**
3. Read the book of Hebrews again:
 - Christ is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession.

- Our High Priest who entered the veil--after order of Melchisdeche
- Lamb of Atonement and our Seat of Mercy

Hebrews 10: 1: For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2: For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3: But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4: For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5: Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7: Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God....10: By the which--will--we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15: Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16: This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17: And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18: Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. 19: Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20: By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21: And having an high priest over the house of God;

IV. CHRIST JESUS IS OUR HOPE TOWARD GOD

Acts 24: 15: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

A. There shall be a resurrection of the dead

1. Both of the just and the unjust

B. Our hope for acceptance is this: I am a sinner, who

1. God chose before the foundation of the world by his free grace,

2. A sinner for whom Christ made full atonement by his own blood.

3. A sinner who he has made the righteousness of God by the imputation of his righteousness to me through faith, apart from any works of my own

4. A sinner who he has made holy and separate unto God by creating a new man in this body of death through the power of the Holy Spirit, (and having begun in the spirit we in now way expect to be made perfect by the works of our flesh)

Galatians 2: 20: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. 21: I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

5. Our hope to be kept until that day is:...

Phillippians 1:6: Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

1 Peter 1:5: Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

John 17:11:...Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

6. Our hope of resurrection is:

Romans 8: 11: But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12: Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

V. BECAUSE CHRIST JESUS IS OUR ALL, HE IS OUR MOTIVATION FOR LIVING A LIFE IN THIS WORLD VOID OF OFFENSE.

Acts 24: 16: And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

A. Toward God--LOOK NOWHERE BUT CHRIST

Colossians 2: 6: As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 8: Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9: For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10: And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 11: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

1. Our desire is to:

Titus 2: 10:...adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

To do all to the glory of God.

B. Toward Men--what made Paul bold to speak as he ought

2 Corinthians 4: 1: Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; 2: But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

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.

Tit 2:11: For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12: Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13: Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

VI. THIS IS THE WAY THE UNREGENERATE RELIGIOUS WORLD CALLS HERESY

Christ Jesus stood face to face with religious men and declared that he came to save his sheep, to give all who trust him eternal life, and that he would do so by laying down his life FOR HIS SHEEP. He told them they did not believe because they were not his sheep. Do you remember what their response was? They said, **"He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?"** They were saying the same things about Paul--But Paul says, **Acts 24: 14: But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers,...**

Application: In the midst of this world and amidst false accusations--

- Live in a manner so that though they accuse they can only falsely accuse
- Live in simplicity and godly sincerity,
- Speak the truth in Christ and lie no more with your neighbor

AND THIS IS GOD'S PROMISE:

Psalm 12: 5: For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. (We see it here:)

Acts 24: 22: And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter. 23: And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

MAY GOD BE PLEASED TO GIVE US THE BOLDNESS TO MAKE PAUL'S CONFESSION OUR OWN!

Amen!

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