

Paul stands before King Herod Agrippa II in Caesarea and has been granted permission to speak (Acts 26:1). In verses 12-20, Paul recounts his Damascus Road experience and what happened subsequent to the meeting of Jesus on that road.

Verse 12—

Paul was not a rogue crusader. He followed the Law of Moses to a tee. As he hunted down Jewish believers in the Messiah, he did so under the **authority and commission from the chief priests**. Paul's purpose for sharing this information may have been his way of saying, everything he is being accused of is because of the commission given to him by the religious leaders who now hate him.

Verses 13-15—

Paul recounts his meeting of Jesus on the Damascus Road. One thing Paul mentions in this retelling that we didn't read in the other two recordings of this account (Acts 9:3-8; 22:6-11), is that **we were all fallen to the earth**. Divine encounters, or angelic revelations in the Hebrew Scriptures always entailed this same reaction; falling down (See Ezekiel 1:28; 3:23; 43:3; Daniel 8:17-18; 10:9). Saul heard the voice in the **Hebrew tongue**. We discussed this in chapter 21; it could be the Hebrew language or Aramaic; it is not clear. **Kick against the pricks** (or goad; a sharp pointed stick or iron rod for directing animals), perhaps the meaning is that it is *futile for a human to strive against the will of God*. In other words, Jesus is communicating to Saul that he has been fighting against God.

Verse 16—

Paul communicates to Agrippa why Jesus appeared unto him, i.e., **to make thee a minister and a witness** of two things 1) **These things which thou hast seen**. 2) **And those things in the which I will** (future tense) **appear unto thee**. Jesus informed Saul that He was going to give him more revelation in later appearances. And, in fact, this fits perfectly with the revelation given to Paul of the *mystery* found in Ephesians 3:1-7. We shouldn't underestimate the importance of this verse in understanding Paul and the transition of the Gospel that is taking place in the book of Acts.

Verse 17,18,19, 20—

Paul had been delivered often during his ministry both from Jews and Gentiles. The **people (singular)** is always Israel, the word for **Gentiles (plural)** is *ethnos*; *literally, nations*. In this case, *Jesus* sent Paul to the Jews and to the nations to preach the kingdom gospel. Paul could not have been preaching the grace gospel to the Gentiles since the mystery had not been revealed to him yet. In fact, it was not until Acts 13:38,39 that the gospel of grace is first voiced. Before Paul received the mystery of the gospel of grace for both Jew and Gentile, he preached the kingdom gospel.

Verse 21—

What was Paul charged with? For following Jesus *within the Law*. He had never forsaken the Law, except for ministering to non-Jews, i.e., Philippian jailer. For the Jewish leaders, the Law and Jesus did not mix.

Verses 22,23—

If Paul preached **none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come**, then it could not have been the grace message since that gospel was *hidden in God* (Ephesians 3:5,9). We should remember that the gospel of the Kingdom was based on the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah, but it was always Law based, not grace based. The gospel of Grace is also based on the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah, but is apart from the Law. There are no works allowed.

Verses 24,25—

Festus being a Roman and not understanding the promise of the Messiah, was taken aback by the mention of the resurrection; he accused Paul of being **mad** (having a mental disorder, literally, *not in his right mind*). Paul's reply was he spoke truthfully and with a sound mind (Titus 2:1,8). Follow Paul in this.

Verses 26,27,28—

Paul appeals to Herod's upbringing to verify his own truthfulness. Agrippa would have known very well about the promises in the Scriptures concerning the Messiah. The promise of the resurrection was not **hidden from him**. The King knows of the promise because **this thing was not done in a corner**. With Festus hearing this entire conversation, and calling Paul mad; Paul turns to Agrippa and said "Believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." There was no way Agrippa could have denied it. He does not deny it, rather he stated, **Almost thou persuades me to be a Christian**. The word Christian is only used three times in the NT and always in connection with the Jews. Paul was not almost persuading Agrippa to become "Christian" as we are, by grace through faith, rather he almost was persuaded that Jesus was Messiah. And, that was Paul's goal...to persuade (see 19:8).

Verse 29—

Since Paul had certainly been given the mystery at this point (see Acts 13:38-39), he certainly includes the *mystery* Gospel when he states that he wishes all were **altogether such as I am**. Paul was at this time the **pattern to them which should hereafter believe** (v. 16).

Verses 30-32—

Festus, along with the King could have set Paul free. Did they send him away in order to appease the Jews and ultimately get rid of their problem? Whatever the case, Festus, Agrippa, and all the rest concluded Paul had done **nothing worthy of death or bonds**.

CHAPTER 27:1-13 | PAUL THE PRISONER BOARDS SHIP TO ROME

Verses 1-13—

Sailing toward Rome.