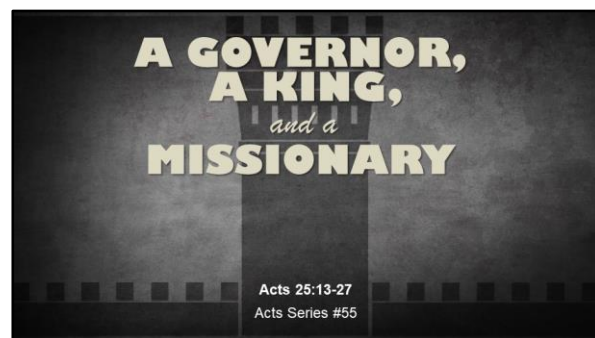


Message #55

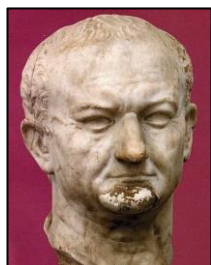
“A GOVERNOR, A KING & A MISSIONARY” (Acts 25:13-27)



BACKGROUND:

Recently appointed governor, Festus, doesn't know what to do with the Paul, the prisoner he inherited from his predecessor, Felix. He keeps Paul in custody in Caesarea (which prevents the Jewish authorities from arranging for him to be killed) and decides to take the opportunity to discuss Paul's case with King Herod Agrippa II, who is regarded as something of an expert on Jewish culture and affairs.

A GOVERNOR



Governor Festus was, mostly, an honourable man, a good administrator and someone who tried to do what was right.

But in this case, he was more than a little confused. That is why he decided to take advantage of King Agrippa's visit to Caesarea to get his opinion on the matter.

Acts 25:13-21 is the account of Festus to Agrippa, detailing the case and his confusion. When Festus concludes his explanation, Agrippa declares that he would like to observe Paul himself. This was then arranged for the following day.

Festus could not understand why the Jewish leaders hated Paul so much. He gives further insight into the extent of his confusion in **Acts 25:19**....

“Instead, they had some points of dispute with him (Paul) about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive”.

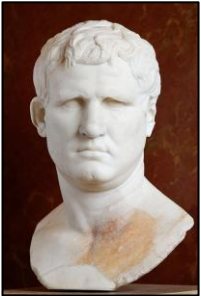
This portion of the narrative provides profound insight, as it reveals the relative ignorance of the gospel among Roman leaders. They may have heard of the gospel (as Felix clearly had), but they did not understand it. The Jews viewed Jesus as the perpetrator of a great scandal which had disrupted their entire religious culture. For the Romans, however, the tale of Jesus only led to confusion! ironically, here we have two non-Christian leaders pondering the theological glory of Christ's resurrection from the dead. God has started to prime their hearts for what will unfold in the next chapter.

Jesus is alive! How do you know this is true? What evidence is there?

How do people nowadays respond to the message of Jesus' resurrection from the dead? Why?

How do you respond to those who cannot/will not accept the resurrection of Jesus?

- The Christian faith presents a Living Redeemer; One who died on a Cross, was buried, who broke the bonds of death and came back to life forevermore.
- No other religion can make that claim (nor tries to).
- You cannot be a biblical Christian and NOT believe in Christ's resurrection.
- The message of the resurrection has been proclaimed from the very first pages of Acts.
- The message of the risen Lord has been a constant and central theme to the message of the gospel.
- People have tried, and failed, to disprove the resurrection for almost 2000 years.
- It was the Risen Lord Jesus that Saul (Paul) encountered on the road outside of Damascus.



A KING

King Herod Agrippa II was the last of the Herodian line.

His father (Agrippa I) had killed James, arrested Peter and had met an untimely end, being eaten by worms after refusing to give God the glory (Acts 12:1-23).

His great-uncle (Herod Antipas), was the ruler who had John the Baptist executed (Luke 3:1); sought Jesus' life (Luke 13:31-33); and later tried Him (Luke 23:7-12).

His great-grandfather (Herod the Great), ruled at the time of Jesus' birth (Matthew 2:12-19) and murdered the children of Bethlehem in an effort to thwart any rival king.

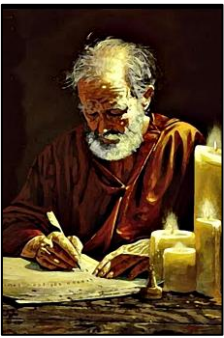
King Herod Agrippa II thus came from a long line of powerful enemies of God.

Do you know of people who “hate” Jesus, or the church, because it has been a “family tradition”?

Agrippa was considered an expert on Jewish customs and culture. Even Paul acknowledges that (Acts 26:3). This was probably why he was keen to see the prisoner, Paul, for himself.

Why do you think King Agrippa wanted to hear Paul?

This was an occasion not to be missed....the Governor, the King, the high-ranking military officers and the prominent citizens of the city....all gathered together in pomp and ceremony. Why? To hear from a controversial missionary prisoner.



A MISSIONARY

What a contrast there would have been when Paul walked into the hall. Here was a man, a prisoner (possibly in chains), and someone that history describes as “short, bald and physically unimposing” and he is ushered into a meeting with a king, a governor, top military officers and the wealthy and powerful members of society.

Talk about a power imbalance!

But Paul was not alone. He had God with him. No one else stood a chance!

And Paul was not one to be overawed by the occasion, or the crowd.

In fact, he was probably giving thanks for another opportunity to share his faith.

Paul seems like he was always bold about proclaiming his faith in Jesus Christ, regardless of the consequences. Do you think you are bold in sharing your faith? Explain your answer.

Would you like to be bolder in sharing your faith?

Have you ever sensed God has given you an opportunity to share your faith, but you did not take it?

Have you ever sensed an opportunity to share your faith and responded to it? What happened?

Corrie ten Boom once said that everyone is either a “missionary or a mission field”. What are you?

Who do you find it most difficult to share your faith with? Why?

Pray that you will have opportunity to share your faith with someone this week.