

## Acts 25-26 Again?

**A couple of weeks ago I found myself – having the same conversation over and over again.**

A)The people changed but the problem they were all dealing with was the same.

**B)I was thinking to myself – one day – not again. – This is weird. - I feel like a broken record.**

1)I was reminded – We so often go through the same struggles and trials.

**C)Maybe you have found yourself feeling like a broken record**

1)Why is it so hard to put the socks in the hamper – instead of by it.

**D)How many times do I have to tell you to do your home work first**

1)Don't forget to take your vitamins

**E)Even in ministry – Keep saying the same thing to the same person – when are they going to get it!**

**Well as we come to Acts 25 – Paul is in that Place – He keeps telling the same story again and again.**

**A)Acts 21-22 He speaks to an angry crowd, Ch.22 Roman Commander Ch. 23 Jewish Council, Ch. 24 Governor Felix.**

**B)Now as we come to Chapter 25-26 Governor Festus and King Agrippa and Bernice.**

1)He will tell HIS story AGAIN!

**C)As you may have noticed there is great repetition in this section of the book of Acts – some tend to think – Tedious**

1)I think it is just a good illustration of life – Life is filled with Repetition

**D) Don't grow weary in well doing – Due season you will reap if you do not lose heart.**

1) Paul doesn't lose heart - He Knows He is Christ's Ambassador.

**In Bible times, the word *ambassador* had little to do with politics.**

**A) Rather, it carried the meaning of “personal messenger,” one sent on a special mission**

B) Every believer is called by Christ to be both a missionary (“one who is sent”) and an ambassador (“one who carries a message”).

C) Jesus said, *“As my Father has sent me, even so send I you”*. (John 20:21)

**In Paul's day Rome had two different kinds of provinces, each related to the Roman government in a different way.**

**A) *Senatorial provinces* were made up of people who had submitted to Rome and were peacefully obeying the law.**

**B) *Imperial provinces*, however, were still rebellious and would create problems for Rome if they could.** 1) Rome sent ambassadors to the imperial provinces but not to the senatorial provinces.

**C) APPLICATION: Christians are God's ambassadors to this world because the world is at war with God.**

(Romans 5:10 KJV) Enemies

D) Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, God has been reconciled to the world (2 Cor 5:18-19)

**But the world will not repent and be reconciled to God.**

**A) For this reason, God must deal with this rebellious world as Rome dealt with their *imperial provinces*.**

**B) He must send his ambassadors with his message of peace.**

**C) This is a TOTAL act of grace; for God has every right to send his angelic armies and judge the world for its sin.**

1) Instead, he offers sinners the gift of peace and forgiveness.

**D) Paul was such a messenger and He was happy to share this message with anyone who would listen.**

1) This time it would be a KING!

Ch.25-26 one story – take together.

**Summarize Ch. 25 v.1-12**

**The scene is Caesarea!**

**A) Paul has been there now in prison for two years –**

**B) Felix is gone and now a guy by the name of Festus – is the Governor.**  
{ Marshal Matt Dillions goofy side kick in Gunsmoke

**C) When Festus took over from Felix, he was about seventy years of age.**

1) History tells us he would rule in this province for two years before dying in office.

**D) So Festus is the Governor and he decides to visit the providence of Jerusalem –**

**The religious leaders in Jerusalem see it as an opportunity for them to renew the charges against Paul.**

A)The **root of bitterness** within Paul's enemies seems to have grown deeper and deeper in the soil of their spirits during his two-year absence.

**B)First encounter with Festus “Nice to meet you, Festus. Glad you're here,” “Now do us a favor: bring Paul back here to Jerusalem.”**

C)Of course, their plan was not for justice. Their plan was to ambush and kill Paul.

**We see a similarity in this to spiritual warfare.**

A)The **HATRED** of the devil towards us **NEVER** diminishes.

B)He knows just how influential a Spirit filled believer can be.

1)Always on the attack

C)So the religious leaders tell all these false accusations about Paul.

1)Riots – insurrection and plague to society etc

D)Festus says – **I am not bringing Paul down here but if you want to come to Caesarea I will hear the matter there.**

E)So the Jewish leaders come down to Caesarea –

**Paul is brought forth the charges are levied against Paul.**

A)When Paul is permitted to answer he says these are not true.

**B)Festus wanting to do the Jews a favor says to Paul – will you go up to Jerusalem to face these charges?**

C)It is at that moment that Paul exercises his right as a Roman citizen and appeals to Ceaser.

## **Why did Paul appeal to Ceaser?**

**A) For one thing, he knew that his destination was Rome, not Jerusalem; and the fastest way to get there was to appeal to Caesar.**

**B) Paul also knew that the Jews had not given up their hopes of killing him, so he was wise to stay under the protection of Rome.**

1) By appealing to Caesar, Paul forced the Romans to guard him and take him to Rome.

**C) Gov Festus is taken back by this V.12 he asked his counselors – Can he do that? Can he appeal to ceaser? - Yes**

Acts 25:12 "You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!"

**Enter AGRIPPA AND BERNICE 13 And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus.**

## **Agrippa II was the last of the Herods**

A) The first of the line was Herod the Great, who killed all the babies in Bethlehem when our Lord was born,

**B) His son, Herod Antipas, had John the Baptist beheaded in prison.**

1) His grandson, Herod Agrippa I, put the Apostle James to death with the sword.

**C) Now his great-grandson, Agrippa II, has been appointed by the Romans to be tetrarch of Galilee.**

D) He was a Roman vassal, but all Jewish and Roman historians agree that he was a man of great mental ability, expert in the affairs of the Jews.

**With him was Bernice. Described in literature as being a ravishing beauty**

**A) She was the sister of Drusilla, the wife of the previous Roman**

**governor, Felix, but she was also the sister of her own husband, Agrippa.**

**B) They were full brother and sister. And yet, contrary to every law of the Jews, they were living together in incestuous relationship.**

C) History tells us Bernice would eventually leave Agrippa for Titus, a Roman general who would later lead his armies to destroy Jerusalem/ burn the temple.

**Following a short stay in Rome, however, Bernice would go back to Agrippa II.**

**A) Bernice was a shady lady and Agrippa was no angel. Thus, many historians say they deserved each other.**

**B) It is before this morally decadent couple, enslaved by their own lust and passion, that the Apostle Paul is about to appear.**

**C) So they show up in Caesarea – Read V. 14- 22**

**D) So Festus lays out the story and Agrippa says I want to hear him myself.**

23 So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in.

## **GREAT POMP or PAGENTRY**

***Great Pomp = Phantasia* { Fantasy – spectacle**

**A) There is no scene with more pomp and circumstance in all the New Testament.**

**B) The “place of hearing” was the amphitheatre on the beach at Caesarea. It would have been packed.**

1) People would have been dressed up. Soldiers would have been standing guard.

**C) Dignitaries would have been in attendance.**

### **Paul is brought in: What a contrast**

A) Agrippa and Bernice would have entered wearing their purple robes of royalty and the gold crowns

**B) Festus would no doubt have put on the scarlet robe which a governor wore on state occasions.**

**C) Then Paul is brought in - He is dressed in the garb of a prisoner, and he is chained to two guards.**

**D) He is unimpressive in his personal appearance.**

1) In 2 Corinthians 10, Paul described his own appearance as being physically weak.

**E) Historians verify that he was a short man with bowed legs, a long hooked nose, little hair, and runny eyes.**

1) And yet, here this “little man” commanded the attention of the entire Roman city of Caesarea.

**NOTE: The CONTRAST between the principle players here. Agrippa and Paul.**

**A) One of them is in purple, the other is in prison garb. .**

**B) One is on a throne, the other is in shackles  
One wears a crown, the other is in chains.**

**C) Agrippa is a king, but in the slavery of sin.**

**D) Paul is a chained prisoner, rejoicing in the freedom of sins forgiven and liberty in Christ.**

**1) Agrippa is an earthly king who could not free Paul nor himself.**

**Paul is an ambassador of the King who had freed him and who could free Agrippa from the damning effects of sin.**

**In V. 24-27 Festus lays out the situation again to the King and to the crowd**

1) Festus says to King Agrippa Paul has appealed to Caesar - if I am sending him to Rome I need a reason.

Acts 26:1

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." 2 "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, 3 especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.

**Why was Paul so happy to talk to Agrippa?**

**A) "because Agrippa understood the Jewish culture, traditions, and religion."**

**B) Paul was happy to talk to anyone about Jesus!**

**C) As Paul shares with King Agrippa- He is going to use his **Jewish background to build a platform** for illustrating how RADICAL it is that He is now a follower of Christ!**

**D) First he points out that even the Jews present could testify to his **Pharisaic background**: Acts 26:4-5**

**4 "My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning**



among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. 5 They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

**And second, I was waiting for the promise of the Messiah. V. 6-8**

6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. 7 To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews.

And then addressing himself to the whole court he asked this amazing question: V.8 says, "Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?"

**Certainly a Jew should not think it incredible,**

A) For one their history was filled with testimony of the power of God – beginning at Creation

Deliverance from Egypt – Red Sea – manna -

**B) why should it seem like an amazing thing to you that God could raise the dead?" asked Paul, referring to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

**C) The same question could be asked today. People have trouble with miracles because they fail to comprehend the power and the reality of God.**

**D) You see, the difficulty of a task can only be determined when measured against the agent who attempts to accomplish it.**

E) Is there anything too hard for God?

**Do you think the God who made the vastness of the universe and the**

**intricacies of the atom can raise the dead? -** It all depends on your view of God

**J. B. Phillips was right in his contention that sometimes our God is indeed too small.**

**A)Great Argument – Creation? Why not Resurrection**

**B)We can flip that today:** Empty tomb is a great evidence for the reliability of the Bible.

1)I can believe it all –Jesus taught it – quoted it – referred to the miraculous stories

**C)Jesus Rose – means it is true –**

1)If he did not rise – our faith is in vain.

**Most of us do not doubt the power of God, but we doubt His willingness to intervene in our situations personally.**

A)Why should He care about us? The answer lies in the Cross. **“If God did not spare His only Son that we might be saved, shall He not freely give us all things pertaining to life?”** Romans 8:32

**B)He will supply everything that’s good for me. How do I know?**

1)Because He already gave me the very best when He gave me His Son, Christ Jesus.

**Paul’s third argument is that he demonstrated how sincere he was in his commitment to his beliefs by the way he persecuted the church. V.9-11**

9 "Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. 11 And I punished them

often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; **{Gun to the head}** and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

**But on the road to Damascus that all Changed!**

## **RD V. 12-16**

**Paul essentially says here is what I came to realize – Jesus had a plan for me all along**

**A) He was making me into something!**

*MAKE* = to handle for oneself in advance

**B) APPLICATION:** Christ had been working in Paul's life up to that very moment to *MAKE* something out of Paul that would **serve His eternal purposes.**

**C) He had been handling Paul in advance to *MAKE* of this proud and violent man a *minister***

**1) Minister** = “an under-rower” and refers to a lowly servant on a galley ship.

**D) NOTE:** The purpose of the under-rower was to get the people above deck to their destination.

**1) What a PERFECT example of Paul's life and ministry. -- He LIVED to get people to Jesus.**

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.”

**So Paul said Jesus told me this is what my mission in life would be V.17-18**

17 I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, 18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

## **THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF THE GOSPEL V.18** *open their eyes*

A) **Sin blinds:** Blinds us to the consequences – no idea the bondage it is going to lead to – how destructive it is going to be – Adultery will destroy a family -

### **B) Second, sin blinds people to the nature of Jesus.**

1) Original lie – God is holding back on you.

**C) Satan still likes to tell that one – Jesus is a Kill Joy – wants to keep you from having fun.**

1) Nothing could be further from the truth.

John 10:10

“Satan does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

**Not only was Paul to open men’s eyes, he was to turn men’s lives from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to the power of God.**

**A) Here is his description of humanity in its lost, broken, fragmented condition.**

Aa) What is the matter with people? "They are blind," Jesus says, "blind and living in darkness."

1) Bound by Satan’s power.

## **B) Satan has blinded man and ensnared man**

1) Behind the darkness is the great enemy of mankind, who is twisting and distorting the thinking of men, spreading abroad widespread delusions.

C) You see, **two kingdoms dwell simultaneously** on this earth: the kingdom of light and love, which is the kingdom of God—and the kingdom of darkness and death, which is the kingdom of Satan.

**Every man is in one of these two kingdoms. No one is neutral, for Jesus said, “He who is not for Me is against Me” Matthew 12:30**

Luke 16:13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other."

## **Satan's kingdom is marked by darkness.**

A) Many cases it is blatant rebellion – most crimes are committed at night.

B) Other cases it is more subtle- Darkness that is just the opposite of the holiness of God –

1) Little compromises – Still darkness

C) Satan's goal is to put men in bondage

## **Again sometimes that is manifested in a blatant way**

**People bound by drug addiction / porn / violence**

A) Never starts there though – starts real subtle –

B) **Bondage of living for self gratification** – living to please self rather than God.

1) For some pp it never progresses past that

**C) Satan doesn't care how lost a person is – as long as they are lost –  
1) As long as they are still in darkness –**

**Interesting that Hell is described in the Bible as a place of OUTER DARKNESS.**

**A) Ever been in a Cave or a dark place – so dark that you couldn't see your hand in front of you.**

**B) Erre isn't it – FEEL THE DARKNESS**

**1) That is going to be Hell – so dark – feel the darkness**

**C) But also hot – Burning up – screams – weeping and Gnashing of teeth.**

**D) Men who choose to live in darkness on earth will spend eternity surrounded by darkness in hell.**

**1) That is Satan's END GAME – GOAL**

**C) That's why Paul said, "My ministry, my job, my vision is to open men's eyes and to turn men's lives from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to the power of God.**

**that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'**

**Part of the sin problem is it leaves us feeling guilty**

**A) Jesus offers forgiveness and freedom – Know the truth and the truth will set you free.**

**B) Sins – GONE – WIPED AWAY FORGIVEN AND FORGOTTEN. – NEW CREATION**

**BB) Complete – Transference – Transferred from the kingdom of Darkness to light – God to Satan.**

**1) Inheritance –**

**C) Available for those who simply believe –**

**D) Guys that is our mission too!**

**1) We get to live for Jesus – preach Jesus  
Pray Lord open the eyes of the blind.**

**Paul says to Agrippa v.19 I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.**

**Repentance is changing one's mind.**

**Regeneration** is when God changes one's heart.

**Redemption** is changing one's state—trading the kingdom of darkness and death for the kingdom of light and life.

“This was my message,” said Paul. V.21

For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

**RD V.22-32**

**AGRIPPA PAUL YOU ALMOST .....**

A) Agrippa was deeply touched by what he was hearing. It was ringing true in his heart—**and yet he bailed out.**

A computer whiz, a Boy Scout, and a minister were flying in a three-passenger plane.

The pilot said, “It's not looking good, guys. Our engines are cutting out and we're going down.

The problem is, we have only three parachutes—and I'm taking one."

**Realizing one of them would be left behind, the passengers looked at one another.**

A)Immediately, the computer whiz grabbed a chute, calling out, "Sorry, guys, but I've got to take this because **I'm the smartest man in the world,**" as he jumped out the door.

B)The minister then turned to the Boy Scout and said, "**I've had a good life. The Lord is real to me. I know I'm going to heaven.**" So you go ahead and take the last chute. I'll go down with the plane."

C)"That won't be necessary," said the Boy Scout. "**The smartest man in the world just jumped out with my backpack.**"

**So, too, Agrippa had the opportunity to make it safely into eternity.**

A)But he grabbed the wrong bag. He grabbed Bernice.

Not the time to grab your wife hand

**B)You see, every time Agrippa is mentioned (25:13; 25:23; 26:30), he's always with Bernice.**

**C)She had a hold on him.- Does sin have a hold of you today?**

An eagle swooped down and grabbed a rodent in its powerful talons. Pulling it to its chest, he soared higher and higher.

Suddenly, however, **he no longer looked majestic**, but began to flap his wings rapidly before losing altitude and crashing into a rock.

Upon investigation, the naturalist observing the scene discovered that the little rodent had its teeth imbedded in the chest of the mighty eagle.

Although the **eagle thought he was controlling** the rodent, all the while the



rodent was actually draining the life from him.

**People think, *I'm controlling him, or her, or it*, as they tighten their grip on sin!**

**A)But in reality, the thing they cling to is the very thing that will drain the life from them.**

**B)Sin does that to you and me. It's a rat.**

1)It'll drain you and keep you from being what God knows you could be.

C)Jesus wants to set up free!

**BUT Do you know that you can almost be a Christian and then be lost for time and eternity?**

How tragic that is!

"Almost" will not do.

**It must be all or nothing. Either you accept Christ or you don't accept Christ.**

Either you have Christ or you don't have Christ.

Either you trust Christ or you don't trust Christ.

Either He is your Savior or He is not your Savior.

It is one of the two.

There is no such thing as a middle ground. It cannot be almost. It must be all.