

Through Paul's Ministry, the Lord is knocking...

to the ends of the world!

Acts 23:12-35

The Plot to Kill Paul

- ☠ Note the extent to which opposition will go to stop God's message.
- ☠ Yet, how does a person end up in the right place and time to thwart evil's plans and desires?
- ☠ Who's door was the Lord possibly knocking on through this incident?

Paul Transferred to Caesarea

- 👁 Note the people God is using to move His messenger to His desired location for His purposes.
- 👁 Paul had no hand in his own destiny.
- 👁 The Lord is driving Paul to be judged before the Gentiles. Or is the Lord bringing judgment to the Gentiles through His servant?
- 👁 Does this bring to mind Romans 8:28?

Acts 24

The Trial Before Felix

- 📁 The Jewish high priest, elders, and a Gentile lawyer present their case against Paul to Governor Felix.
- 📁 Note Paul's fittedness for this venue.

Discussion: To what extent did God carefully hand pick and prepare His mouthpiece? I.e. skills, knowledge, character, etc.

Note carefully the contents of Paul's testimony...

Paul replied:

- 📁 "I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense.
- 📁 You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me.
- 📁 However, I admit that **I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way**, which they call a sect. **I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in**

the Prophets, and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

- ☞ After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me. Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin— unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: **'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'** "

Is our testimony centralized on Jesus' resurrection? Why or why not?

Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. ...

... He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. As Paul discoursed on **righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come**, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! ..."

- What does Felix's dealings with Paul reveal about this Gentile ruler? Is Paul on trial or is Felix? Consider the Word of God's perspective.
- Why is Felix so afraid of the Lord's knocking?

Acts 25

The Trial Before Festus

- The Jews made another attempt to execute their plan to murder Paul.
- Then Paul made his defense: "I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar."
- Festus tried to do the Jews a favor and get Paul back to Jerusalem but note Paul's reply...
- "... I appeal to Caesar!"
- Then just as planned, "To Caesar you will go!"

Festus Consults King Agrippa

- Note the clarity of Paul's testimony **"...about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive."**
- If our testimony is to be accurate and faithful to the Word of God, the dead Man who is now alive must be central to our message so that there is no mistaken perception or understanding about what and who we are testifying.

Paul Before Agrippa

... Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may have something to write.
27For I think it is unreasonable to send on a prisoner without specifying the charges against him."

Acts 26

- Paul gives his testimony. Note the consistency and soundness of it. The same message every time is a strong indicator for truth. Truth always has a unique ring and frequency which will cause particular responses. Refer to John 10:14-18
- "... I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike.
I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen— that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles."

...because **it was not done in a corner.** King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."

28Then Agrippa said to Paul, **"Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"**

29Paul replied, "Short time or long—I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."

- Why is Agrippa so hesitant about responding to the Lord's knocking?
- "It was not done in a corner...do you believe the prophets? I know you do." Why is it so difficult for the rich and powerful to respond to the Gospel of Jesus Christ even though it was and still is a message so irrefutable?

"This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment." Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

- ***Nothing was going to stop God***
from having His way with Paul and the Gospel.