

BEFORE KINGS AND COUNCILS

20:17-35 (ch. 18:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8). An All-round Minister.--His [Paul's] toil-worn hands, as he presented them before the people, bore testimony that he was not chargeable to any man for his support. They detracted nothing, he deemed, from the force of his pathetic appeals, sensible, intelligent, and eloquent beyond those of any other man who had acted a part in the Christian ministry. In Acts 20:17-35 we see outlined the character of a Christian minister who faithfully performed his duty. He was an all-round minister. We do not think it is obligatory on all ministers to do in all respects as Paul did. Yet we say to all that Paul was a Christian gentleman of the highest type. His example shows that mechanical toil does not necessarily lessen the influence of anyone, that working with the hands in any honorable employment should not make a man coarse and rough and discourteous (YI Jan. 31, 1901)

20:30 (2 Timothy 4:3, 4; 2 Peter 2:1). Strangle Unstable Theories.-- From the light given me of the Lord, men will arise speaking perverse things. Yea, already they have been working and speaking things which God has never revealed, bringing sacred truth upon a level with common things. Issues have been and will continue to be made of men's conceited fallacies, not of truth. The devisings of men's minds will invent tests that are no tests at all, that when the true test shall be made prominent, it shall be considered on a par with the man-made tests that have been of no value. We may expect that everything will be brought in and mingled with sound doctrine, but by clear, spiritual discernment, by the heavenly anointing, we must distinguish the sacred from the common which is being brought in to confuse faith and sound judgment and demerit the great, grand, testing truth for this time. . . . Never, never was there a time when the truth will suffer more from being misrepresented, belittled, demerited through the perverse disputings of men than in these last days. Men have brought themselves in with their heterogeneous mass of heresies which they represent as oracles for the people. The people are charmed with some strange, new thing, and are not wise in experience to discern the character of ideas that men may frame up as something. But to call it something of great consequence and tie it to the oracles of God does not make it truth. Oh, how this rebukes the low standard of piety in the churches. Men who want to present something original will conjure up things new and strange, and without consideration will step forward on these unstable theories that have been woven together as a precious theory. And present it as a life and death question. . . . We have the truth, the solid truth in the Word of God, and all these speculations and theories would better be strangled in the cradle rather than nourished and brought to prominence. We are to hear the voice of God from His revealed Word, the sure word of prophecy. Those who will magnify themselves and seek to do some wonderful thing would better come to a sound mind (Letter 136a, 1898).

(Psalm 119:126, 127; 1 Timothy 4:1.) Traitors to Truth Become Her Worst Persecutors.--Much so-called Christianity passes for genuine, faithful soundness, but it is because those who profess it have no persecution to endure for the truth's sake. When the day comes when the law of God is made void, and the church is sifted by the fiery trials that are to try all that live upon the earth, a great proportion of those who are supposed to be genuine will give heed to seducing spirits, and will turn traitors and betray sacred trusts. They will prove our very worst persecutors. "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them;" and many will give heed to seducing spirits. Those who have lived on the flesh and blood of the Son of God--His Holy Word--will be strengthened, rooted, and grounded in the faith. They will see increased evidence why they should prize and obey the Word of God. With David, they will say, "They have made void thy law. Therefore love I thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold." While others count them dross, they will arise to defend the faith. All who study their convenience, their pleasure, their enjoyment, will not stand in their trial (RH June 8, 1897).

As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbathkeepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them. {GC 608.2}

21:20-26 (Galatians 2:11, 12). Paul's Advisers Not Infallible.--This concession was not in harmony with his teachings nor with the firm integrity of his character. His advisers were not infallible. Though some of these men wrote under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, yet when not under its direct influence they sometimes erred. It will be remembered that on one occasion Paul withstood Peter to the face because he was acting a double part (LP 214).

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While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd.



Paul convinced the Roman commander to allow him to speak to the people, to defend himself.

**Which he did!**



21:39 (ch. 22:3, 25-28). Paul's Background.-- His [Paul's] father was a man of reputation. He was a Cilician, but still a Roman citizen; for Paul declares that he was freeborn. Others obtained this freedom with a great sum, but Paul was freeborn. Paul had been educated by the most learned teachers of the age. He had been taught by Gamaliel. Paul was a rabbi and a statesman. He was a member of the Sanhedrim (MS 95, 1899).

22:5-16 (ch. 26:9-16). Paul Never Forgot His Remarkable Conversion.-- The apostle could never forget his conversion from a persecutor of all who believe on Christ, to a believer in Him. What a bearing this conversion had on all his afterlife! What an encouragement it was as he worked on the side of Him whom he once ridiculed and despised. He could never forget the assurance conveyed to him in the first part of his ministry. He could speak intelligently because he had an experience, a personal knowledge, of the Lord Jesus Christ. He had a living, abiding faith, for he cultivated a sense of the presence of Christ in all his works. He received strength in prayer, and as a faithful soldier of Christ he ever looked to his Captain for orders. No amount of obstacles piled up before him, could cause him to regard the work as an impossibility, for he realized that "all things are possible to them that believe" (MS 114, 1897).

In every place where the apostle Paul was called to go after his conversion, he gave a vivid presentation of the ministration of heavenly angels in his conversion (MS 29, 1900).

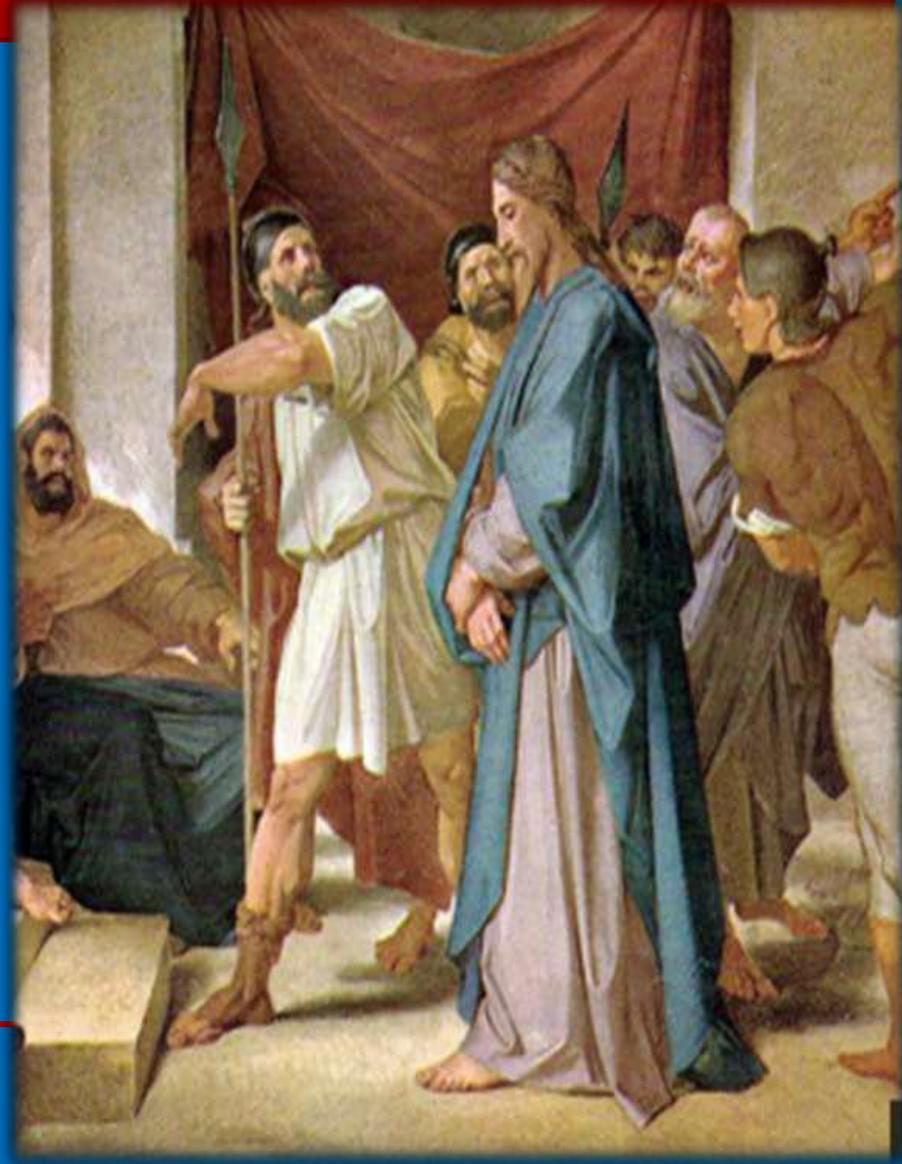
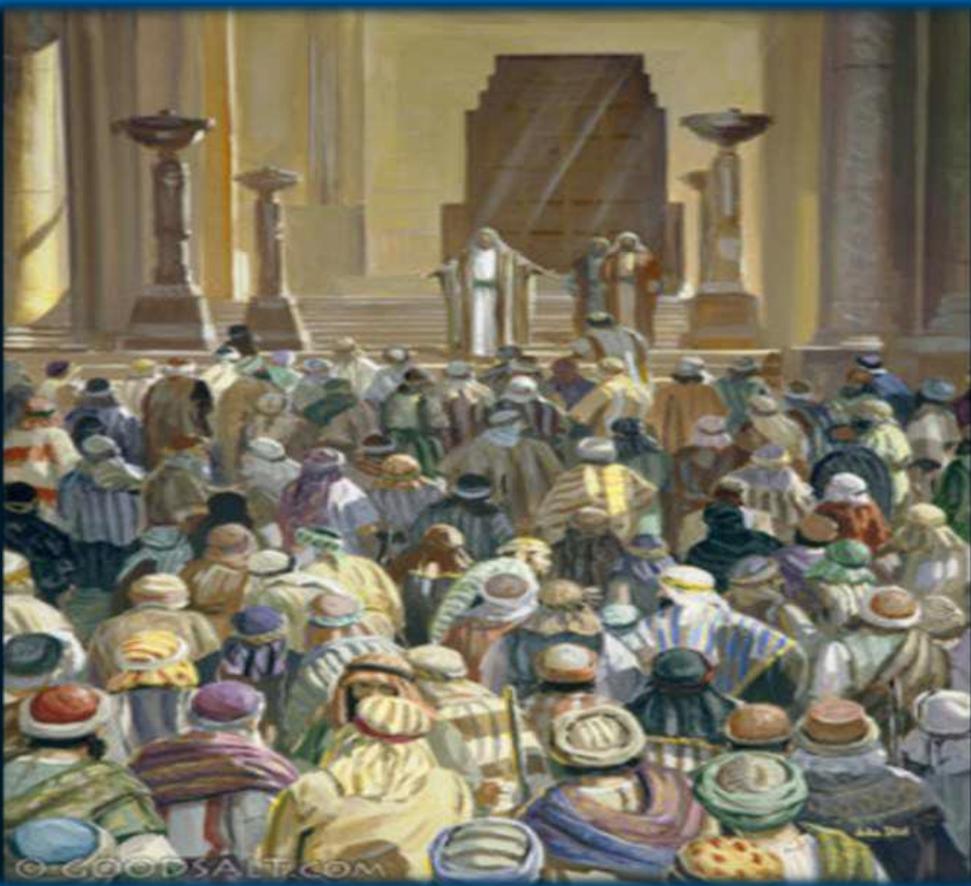
Paul, in chains, was brought  
before the Council, *Sadducees*  
*and Pharisees.*

ACTS 23

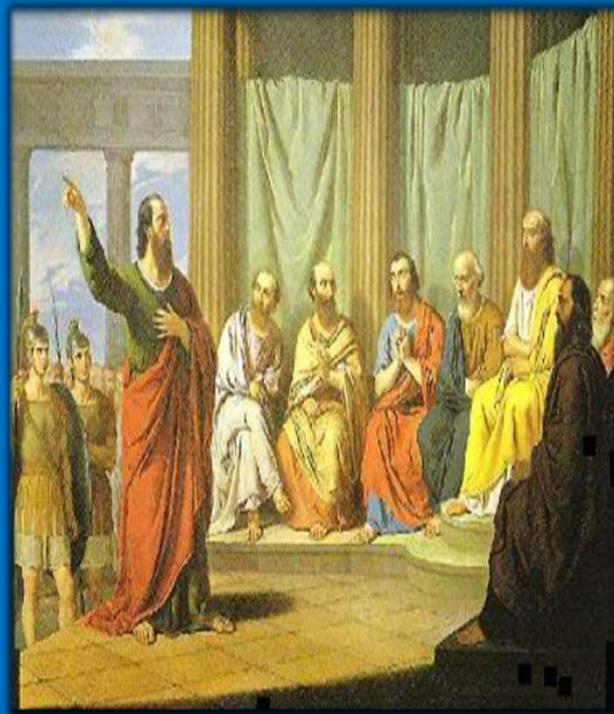
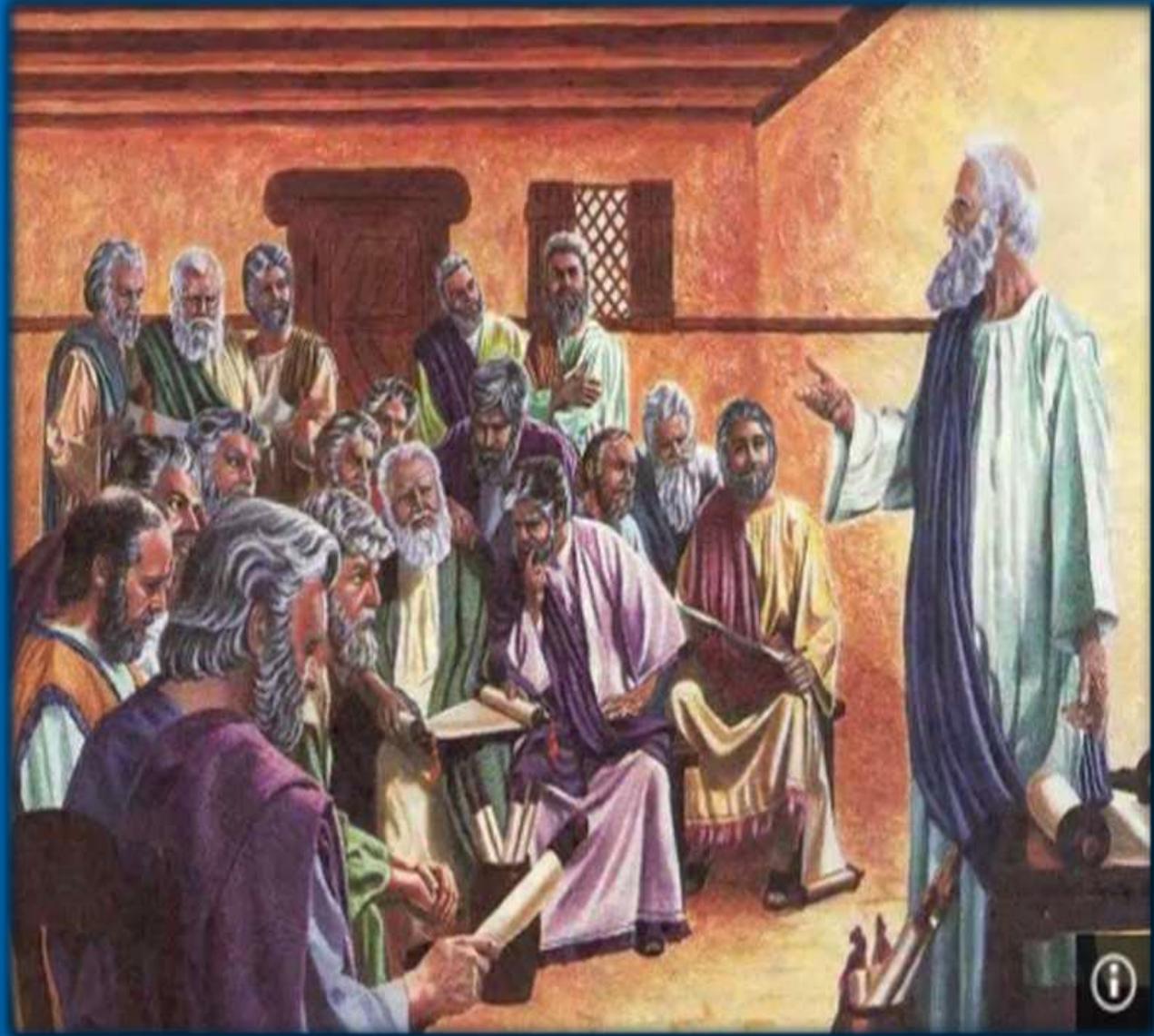
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Paul defends himself before the Council.  
Ananias, the High Priest, orders the guard  
to slap Paul in the face.

Before  
Ananias  
the High  
Priest



Paul then recounted his personal history as a Pharisee and said, “I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead.”

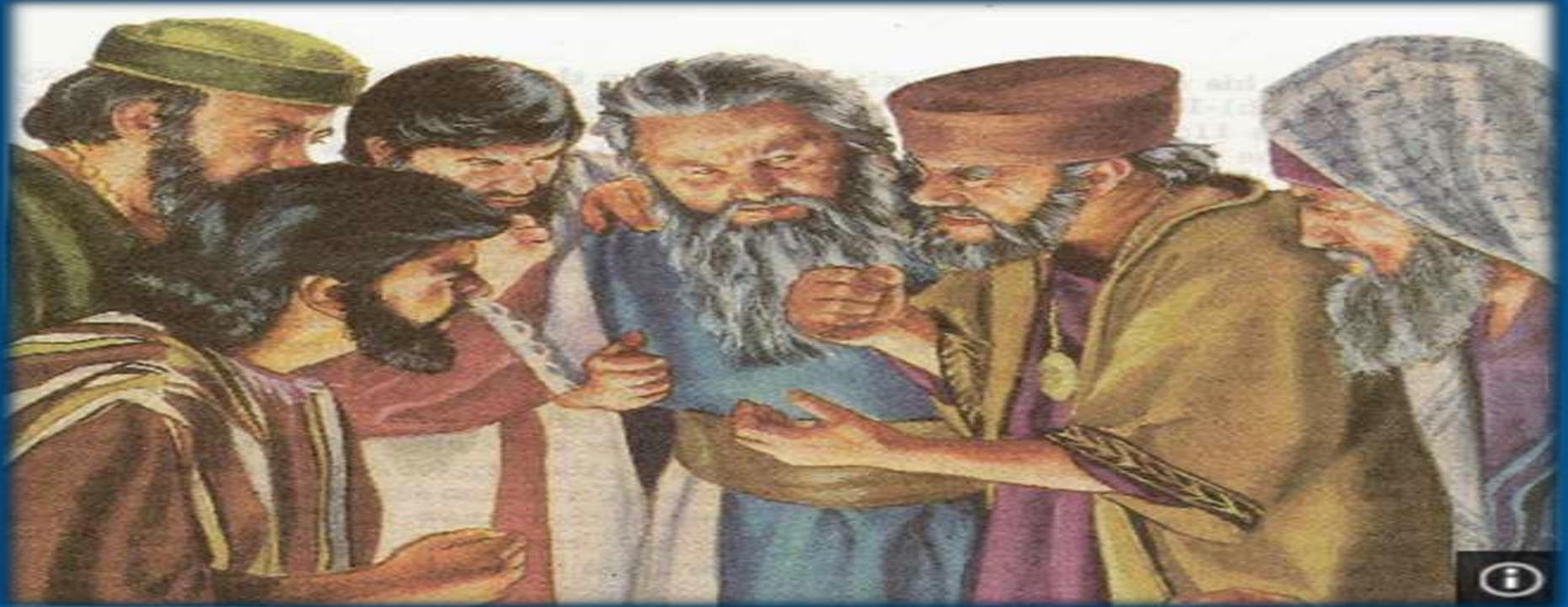


The Council was split and argued over the resurrection.  
They were divided, a great dissension, an uproar, heated arguing.  
Paul was in danger, physical danger.



**The commanders saw the danger and ordered the troops to take Paul into the barracks for his protection.**





The Next Morning  
Overnight the Jews had formed a conspiracy.....

Acts 23:12: And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

### The Time of Trouble

I saw the saints leaving the cities and villages, and associating together in companies, and living in the most solitary places. Angels provided them food and water, while the wicked were suffering from hunger and thirst. Then I saw the leading men of the earth consulting together, and Satan and his angels busy around them. I saw a writing, copies of which were scattered in different parts of the land, giving orders that unless the saints should yield their peculiar faith, give up the Sabbath, and observe the first day of the week, the people were at liberty after a certain time to put them to death. But in this hour of trial the saints were calm and composed, trusting in God and leaning upon His promise that a way of escape would be made for them. In some places, before the time for the decree to be executed, the wicked rushed upon the saints to slay them; but angels in the form of men of war fought for them. Satan wished to have the privilege of destroying the saints of the Most High; but Jesus bade His angels watch over them. God would be honored by making a covenant with those who had kept His law, in the sight of the heathen round about them; and Jesus would be honored by translating, without their seeing death, the faithful, waiting ones who had so long expected Him. {EW 282.2}

# Paul before Festus

The Jewish Chief Priests against Paul conspired to get him killed.

If they could convince Festus to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem and on the way they would ambush Paul.

But...Festus left Paul in Caesarea.



# Paul before King Agrippa

Festus called for King Herod Agrippa to come to Caesarea to judge Paul.

King Agrippa

Paul



Amidst much pomp and ceremony, honoring the arrival of King Agrippa, Paul was brought into the auditorium, as many Jews who wanted Paul tried and killed watched on.

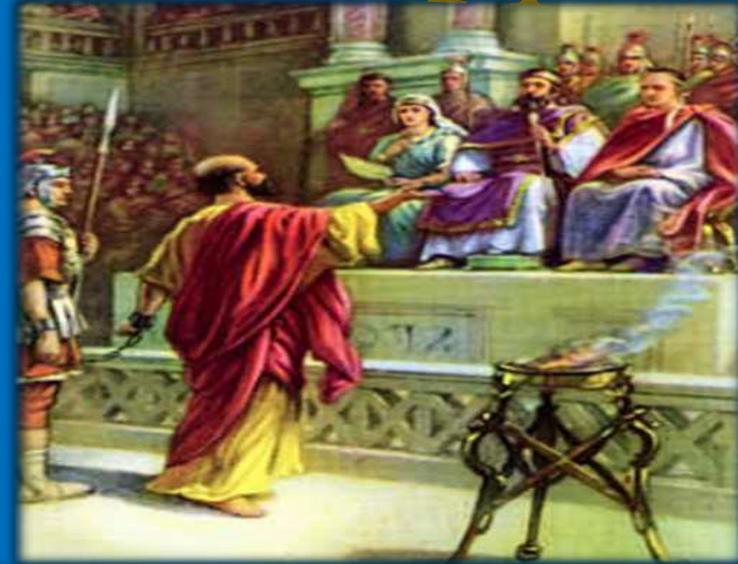
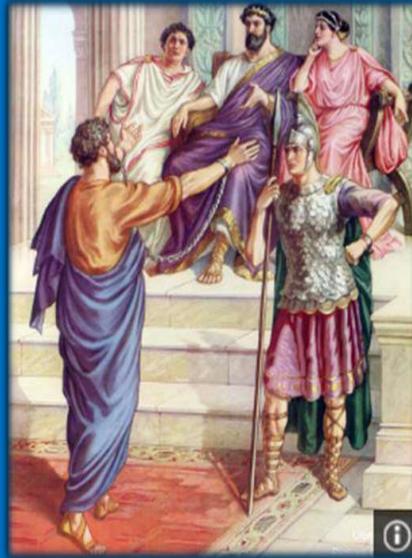
# Paul before King Agrippa

Order of events

King Agrippa arrives in Caesarea.

All gather in the Auditorium.

Festus welcomes King Agrippa



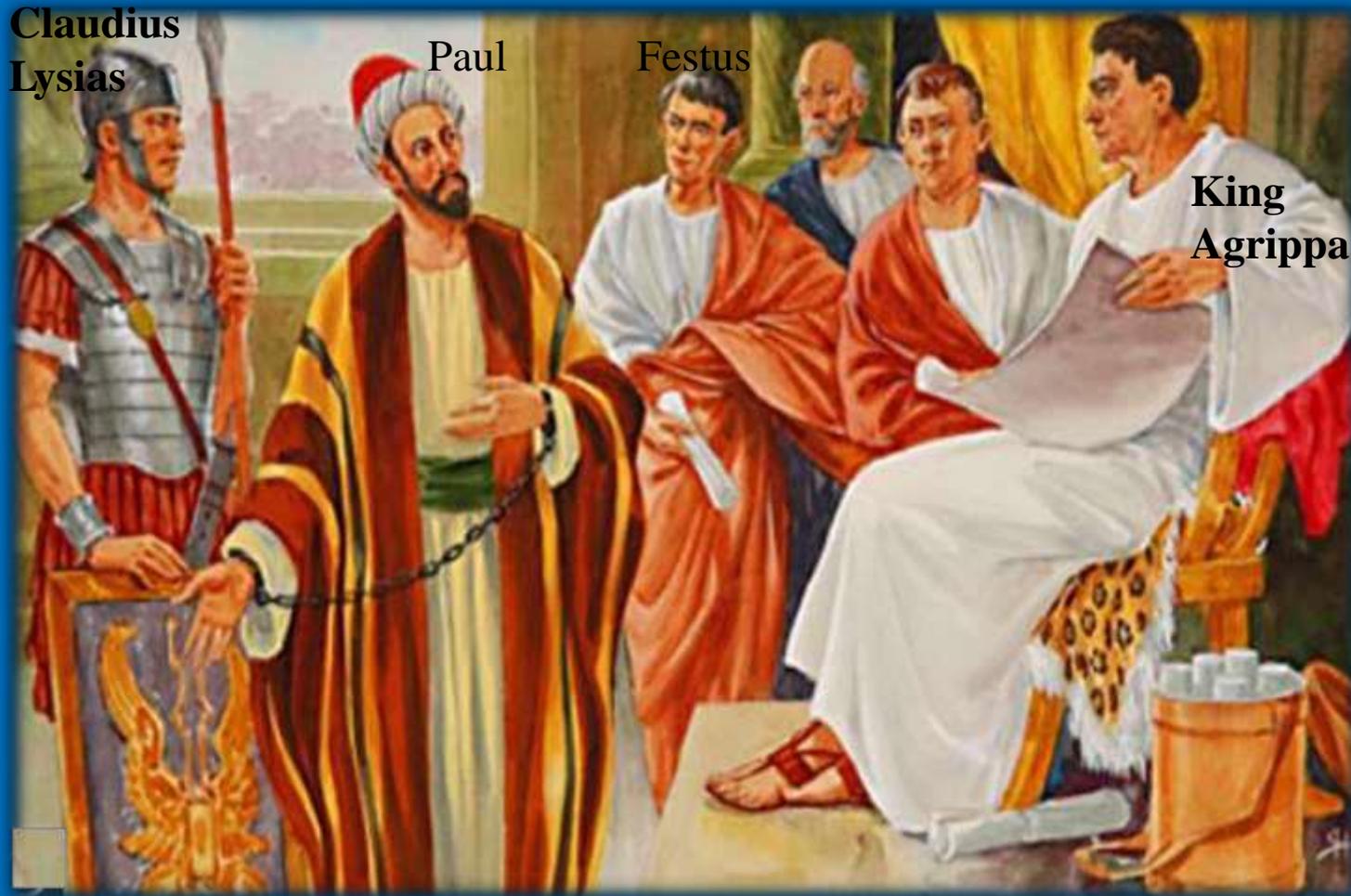
King Agrippa told Paul to speak.

Paul recounted his history as a violent Pharisee and his conversion on the road to Damascus; and the Lord's command to minister to the Gentiles.



King Agrippa, “This man is not doing anything worthy of death or imprisonment.”

*They would now send Paul to Rome, to the Emperor, still in chains, in custody.*



Matthew 10:17: But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; 18: And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. 19: But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. 20: For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

23:3. An Inspired Denunciation.--Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, Paul uttered a prophetic denunciation similar to that which Christ had uttered in rebuking the hypocrisy of the Jews. The judgment pronounced by the apostle was terribly fulfilled when the iniquitous and hypocritical high priest was murdered by assassins in the Jewish war (LP 222). {

23:20-23. Lysias Feared for His Own Safety.--Lysias gladly improved this opportunity to get Paul off his hands. . . . A short time previous, a Roman knight of far higher rank than Lysias himself, had been violently taken and dragged by the maddened Jews around the walls of Jerusalem and finally beheaded, because he received a bribe from the Samaritans. Upon the suspicion of similar crimes, other high officials had been imprisoned and disgraced. Should Paul be murdered, the chief captain might be charged with having been bribed to connive at his death. There was now sufficient reason to send him away secretly, and thus get rid of an embarrassing responsibility (LP 227).

24:2, 3. Felix Base and Contemptible.--Tertullus here descended to barefaced falsehood. The character of Felix was base and contemptible. . . . An example of the unbridled licentiousness that stained his character is seen in his alliance with Drusilla, which was consummated about this time. Through the deceptive arts of Simon Magus, a Cyprian sorcerer, Felix had induced this princess to leave her husband and to become his wife. Drusilla was young and beautiful, and, moreover, a Jewess. She was devotedly attached to her husband, who had made a great sacrifice to obtain her hand. There was little indeed to induce her to forgo her strongest prejudices and to bring upon herself the abhorrence of her nation for the sake of forming an adulterous connection with a cruel and elderly profligate. Yet the satanic devices of the conjurer and the betrayer succeeded, and Felix accomplished his purpose (LP 235, 236).

24:22. Felix Not Deceived Regarding Paul.--Felix himself had so long resided at Caesarea--where the Christian religion had been known for many years--that he had a better knowledge of that religion than the Jews supposed, and he was not deceived by their representations (LP 239).

24:27. Strife in Caesarea; Felix Removed.--Toward the close of this time there arose a fearful strife among the population of Caesarea. There had been frequent disputes, which had become a settled feud, between the Jews and the Greeks, concerning their respective rights and privileges in the city. All the splendor of Caesarea, its temples, its palaces, and its amphitheater, were due to the ambition of the first Herod. Even the harbor, to which Caesarea owed all its prosperity and importance, had been constructed by him at an immense outlay of money and labor. The Jewish inhabitants were numerous and wealthy, and they claimed the city as theirs, because their king had done so much for it. The Greeks, with equal persistency, maintained their right to the precedence. Near the close of the two years, these dissensions led to a fierce combat in the market place, resulting in the defeat of the Greeks. Felix, who sided with the Gentile faction, came with his troops and ordered the Jews to disperse. The command was not instantly obeyed by the victorious party, and he ordered his soldiers to fall upon them. Glad of an opportunity to indulge their hatred of the Jews, they executed the order in the most merciless manner, and many were put to death. As if this were not enough, Felix, whose animosity toward the Jews had increased every year, now gave his soldiers liberty to rob the houses of the wealthy.

These daring acts of injustice and cruelty could not pass unnoticed. The Jews made a formal complaint against Felix, and he was summoned to Rome to answer their charges. He well knew that his course of extortion and oppression had given them abundant ground for complaint, but he still hoped to conciliate them. Hence, though he had a sincere respect for Paul, he decided to gratify their malice by leaving him a prisoner. But all his efforts were in vain; though he escaped banishment or death, he was removed from office, and deprived of the greater part of his ill-gotten wealth. Drusilla, the partner of his guilt, afterward perished, with their only son, in the eruption of Vesuvius. His own days were ended in disgrace and obscurity (LP 245, 246).

For two years no further action was taken against Paul, yet he remained a prisoner. Felix visited him several times and listened attentively to his words. But the real motive for this apparent friendliness was a desire for gain, and he intimated that by the payment of a large sum of money Paul might secure his release. The apostle, however, was of too noble a nature to free himself by a bribe. He was not guilty of any crime, and he would not stoop to commit a wrong in order to gain freedom. Furthermore, he was himself too poor to pay such a ransom, had he been disposed to do so, and he would not, in his own behalf, appeal to the sympathy and generosity of his converts. He also felt that he was in the hands of God, and he would not interfere with the divine purposes respecting himself. {AA 426.3}

Felix was finally summoned to Rome because of gross wrongs committed against the Jews. Before leaving Caesarea in answer to this summons, he thought to "show the Jews a pleasure" by allowing Paul to remain in prison. But Felix was not successful in his attempt to regain the confidence of the Jews. He was removed from office in disgrace, and Porcius Festus was appointed to succeed him, with headquarters at Caesarea. {AA 427.1}

A ray of light from heaven had been permitted to shine upon Felix, when Paul reasoned with him concerning righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come. That was his heaven-sent opportunity to see and to forsake his sins. But he said to the messenger of God, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." He had slighted his last offer of mercy. Never was he to receive another call from God. {AA 427.2}

26:26-28. What Were Agrippa's Thoughts?--Did the mind of Agrippa at these words revert to the past history of his family, and their fruitless efforts against Him whom Paul was preaching? Did he think of his great-grandfather Herod, and the massacre of the innocent children of Bethlehem? of his great-uncle Antipas, and the murder of John the Baptist? of his own father, Agrippa I, and the martyrdom of the apostle James? Did he see in the disasters which speedily befell these kings an evidence of the displeasure of God in consequence of their crimes against His servants? Did the pomp and display of that day remind Agrippa of the time when his own father, a monarch more powerful than he, stood in that same city, attired in glittering robes, while the people shouted that he was a god? Had he forgotten how, even before the admiring shouts had died away, vengeance, swift and terrible, had befallen the vainglorious king? Something of all this flitted across Agrippa's memory; but his vanity was flattered by the brilliant scene before him, and pride and self-importance banished all nobler thoughts (LP 255, 256).

# God's Confidence in His Word

- Isa 55:10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:
- Isa 55:11 **So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *[in the thing] whereto I sent it.***

# The Power of God's Word

- Heb 4:12 For **the word of God [is] quick, and powerful,** and sharper than any twoedged sword, **piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit,** and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

# The Extent of the Minister's Authority

- 2Ti 4:2 **Preach the word**; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.
- The use of bribes and or threats for achieving a desired result in God's work is outside His plan for advancing His Kingdom on earth.

# Contend For The Faith

- “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort [you] that **ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.**” Jude 1:3,4

And how are we to contend?

- “Hear ye now what the LORD saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and **let the hills hear thy voice.**”

Micah 6:1

# No Weapon but God's Spirit

- “Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This [is] the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, **Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.** 7 Who [art] thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel [thou shalt become] a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone [thereof with] shoutings, [crying], Grace, grace unto it.” Zech 4:6,7

## We are told

- “These sacred truths, believed and practiced, are not to be carried in any coercive manner, but **in the spirit of the Master.** The Holy Spirit will reach noble minds and the better spirit of men.” Ev 541

# RH, August 18, 1896

- “In striking contrast to the wrong and oppression so universally practised were the mission and work of Christ. Earthly kingdoms are established and upheld by physical force, but this was not to be the foundation of the Messiah's kingdom. **In the establishment of his government no carnal weapons were to be used, no coercion practised; no attempt would be made to force the consciences of men.** These are the principles used by the prince of darkness for the government of his kingdom. ....”

## {DA 217.2}

- “The works of Christ not only declared Him to be the Messiah, but showed **in what manner His kingdom was to be established**. To John was opened the same truth that had come to Elijah in the desert, when "a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire:" and after the fire, God spoke to the prophet by "a still small voice." 1 Kings 19:11, 12.

{DA 217.2}

- “So Jesus was to do His work, not with the clash of arms and the overturning of thrones and kingdoms, but through speaking to the hearts of men by a life of mercy and self-sacrifice.”

## {DA 487.3}

- **“It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him.** It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, that seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederate with evil angels bring suffering upon their fellow men, in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love.

## {DA 487.3}

- “He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love. **There can be no more conclusive evidence that we possess the spirit of Satan than the disposition to hurt and destroy those who do not appreciate our work, or who act contrary to our ideas.”**

# The Sweet Fragrance of Christ-Likeness

- {ML 178.2} Your influence reaches the soul; you touch not a wire but that vibrates back to God. . . . It is your duty to be Christians in the highest sense of the word "Christlike." It is through the unseen lines that attract you to other minds with which you are brought in contact that may, if you are in constant connection with God, leave impressions that will make you a savor of life unto life.