

0 Resurrection: True and Reasonable

Acts 26:24-32

1 Background

- Main point:
 - Hope of the promise made by God to the fathers (26:6)
 - “to which the twelve tribes hope to attain” (26:7)
 - The question that confronts everyone:
 - “why is it considered incredible among you people if God does raise the dead?” (26:8)
 - This is a “world view” question, it confronts the heart of what you (really) believe

2 The Interruption

- As Paul was speaking, making his defense before Agrippa, Festus raises his voice to interrupt (24)
 - “...you are out of your mind!” = “you are a raving lunatic” or “you are given over to irrationality”
 - “your great learning is driving you mad.” = “your many letters are turning you to madness” or “your great learning is turning you to be totally irrational (or mad) in your thinking”

3 The Interruption

- Why would Festus respond in that particular way?
 - Simply put, because of his world view
 - His view of reality and how things operate within his world view runs counter to what Paul was presenting
 - It didn’t “make sense” to him within his outlook on life
 - So if he is being ‘clear headed’ and ‘rational’ then Paul must not be, he must be a ‘raving lunatic’

4 The Answer

- Paul acknowledges Festus’s interruption and responds (25-26):
 - “I am not out of my mind” = “I am not being given over to madness or irrationality”
 - “I utter words of sober truth” = “I declare words of truth and of rationality” or “I am saying words that comport with reality and are level headed”

5 The Answer

- Let’s ask the famous question that Pilate asked
 - What is truth?
 - Atheistic materialists may answer: anything that can be observed and consistent with the scientific process
 - Observation, hypothesis, testing, develop theory, submit to peer review and

eventually a theory

- What would Paul say?
 - That which is consistent with the living and true God, the reality that he established and the purpose and promise fulfilled in Jesus Christ

6 **The Answer**

- Now Paul didn't limit his answer to simply 'truth' but "words of truth and of rationality"
 - So Paul was speaking words not just consistent with truth but also rationality
 - Sober = intellectual soundness; rationality, reasonableness; soundness of mind
 - Paul and Festus were in conflict with each other on a world view level
 - For Paul, the living and true God is able to raise the dead thus the resurrection of Jesus Christ is consistent with truth and rationality (reason) in the consistent fulfillment with God's promise and purpose

7 **The Answer**

- Since Paul is making his defense before Agrippa, look at what he does next
 - "the king knows about these matters"
 - Agrippa was an 'expert' in Jewish controversy (e.g., debate on the resurrection between the Pharisees and Sadducees)
 - More than that, he was a direct observer of the goings on for the events surrounding Paul's claims were done in the open
 - Therefore, he could speak boldly with confidence to Agrippa concerning the message of life

8 **The Invitation**

- Begins with a simple question specifically geared toward the knowledge of Agrippa (27-29)
 - Literally, "Do you believe, King Agrippa, the prophets? I know that you believe."
 - In other words, because you have expert knowledge of Jewish belief/Scripture this is where the natural outworking of that knowledge should bring you
 - —it should bring you to belief in all that Moses and the prophets have taught concerning the Messiah (humiliation and exaltation) being fulfilled in Jesus
 - Paul demonstrates that any time to give testimony is the right time to bring home the claims of Christ
 - Challenge others to believe

9 **The Invitation**

- Agrippa replies
 - In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian
 - However, we should not think of this statement as Agrippa being close to believing in Jesus Christ
 - Rather, "in a little you persuade me to make a Christian" or "in a short time you are trying to persuade me to act as a Christian"

- Not necessarily sarcasm, but he does seek to evade the issue as he does not want to be thought of as a Christian
- This is testimony to determine what to say to Caesar
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10 **The Invitation**

- Now we are introduced to the heart of Paul concerning his desire for all to take seriously the claims of Christ (29)
 - Whether in a little or great amount of time I pray to God that you and all that hear me be as I am
 - Except for these chains
 - He made his defense, he laid out the claims of Christ in accordance with the Scriptures, centering on the resurrection
 - His heart's desire was for everyone to be set free from slavery to sin and corruption and have new life in Christ

11 **The Conference**

- With that, Paul's defense was done as Agrippa and the others with him, stood to leave (30-32)
 - Their conclusion?
 - He has done nothing worthy of death or imprisonment
 - He could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar
 - They were unwilling to risk their own political futures to release Paul even though they knew he was innocent

12 **Final Considerations**

- Today we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
 - It is true
 - It is reasonable/rational
- Unfortunately, it is challenged today with a new wave of atheistic materialism
 - Who say it is scientifically impossible but if found to be true it will have a strictly scientific explanation
 - Who say that there is no proof of any claims of Christianity

13 **Final Considerations**

- However, without the resurrection we are without hope in the world
- Remember, far from unprovable, it is a world view clash that is not solved by evidentiary means (whether there may be crackers in the pantry)
- It is about the one who knows all things and reveals to us the nature of reality and how we are to think about it
- The grace of God is manifested to us in the resurrection for it is therein we find the answer to what truly infects society and the cause of its ills