

7/30/19

NT#30

A Minister and a Witness
Acts 22-28

GT

Contrast Stephen ↔ Paul

died right away suffered & traveled
Both valiant in their testimony Paul's

→ we can't judge how much God approves of us by the external difficulties we face.

Begin in Acts 21:

Agabus

Paul told not to go to Jerusalem - binds hands & feet with his belt.

Paul shaves his head and goes into the temple with four other men also purifying themselves. But the Jews think he is there with a Gentile.

v. 24 Paul's purpose in making his vow is to show outwardly he still respects the Law of Moses.

• interesting tactic, considering that being an observant Jew hasn't helped any of Christ's followers to this point.

v. 28 a mob forms to kill Paul, for teaching against the Law & polluting the temple. The Romans hear about it and arrive in time to save Paul.

Paul asks (in Greek) if he might address the mob.

He speaks to the mob in Hebrew.

Luke makes mention (both at the beginning & the end of Paul's speech) that the Romans save Paul's life. The Romans are given credit for preserving the religious liberty of Christians, possibly (?) allowing Romans w/ power of any sort who read Acts to see themselves as protectors & identify with the soldiers.

Ch. 22

Paul begins with men, brethren, the same way Stephen began. Paul puts himself in the position of Stephen & the mob in his former position: "I was zealous toward God as you are now." "Repetitive but..."

Paul's story is of his conversion (ch. 9) and of his vision afterwards of Christ in the temple. When Christ tells him to leave Jerusalem, Paul counters with his history of persecuting Christians. Again, this is something Paul thinks will help but the history of Jews' attitudes toward Christians could have warned him it would be otherwise. When he says he was sent to the Gentiles, however, they try again to kill him. He hopes they will think ~~that~~ it obvious that only a great miracle could have converted him, but what they hear is that they as a people have been rejected by Paul's God in favor of the Gentiles. This idea they resisted violently.

* They cried out, cast off their clothes, (as a person would do before stoning a criminal) and throw dust in the air (in lieu of the absent stones and in impotent rage)

The Roman commander is going to scourge him to find out the truth, but Paul reveals himself as a Roman citizen and is thus due a trial.

Luke shows Paul in the same situation as Christ - about to be beaten by the Romans. Paul is saved from this when he confesses to being Roman

Ch. 23 -

- Paul shows his obedience to the Law → when he is smitten he rebukes the man who ordered it, then is repentant when he finds out he is the high priest, because of exodus 22:28 "thou shalt not curse the ruler of thy people." This shows a) Paul considers the High Priest the ruler of the Jews, and b) Paul has an amazing familiarity with, and perhaps total memorization of, the Law
- Paul is saved because he wisely highlights the fact that his message is one of belief in resurrection, and this pits Pharisee against Sadducee (the Pharisees are more than happy to let a little fish like Paul swim away for a chance to score points against the S)
 - There is a riot in the Sanhedrin, and the commander takes Paul away → again, the power of Rome against the Jews.
 - Luke's subtle message is that it is the power of Rome that protects Christians v. 11 the Lord stood by him → be of good cheer Thou must bear witness at Rome
 - More than 40 Jews make a pledge to kill Paul → involve the chief priest - secret combination
 - Paul is made aware of this, and again saved by the Romans → they carry him to Caesarea for trial. In this trial, Roman authority again finds that Paul is not worthy of death for speaking contrary to Jewish Law (as they see it)
 - they also accuse him of sedition v. 14 the way v. 22 that way
 - Felix claims he wants the Jerusalem commander to testify but he really wants to please the Jews or receive a bribe, so he leaves Paul in prison until he is replaced by Festus
- Ch 25 The Jews again hatch a conspiracy against Paul. Festus feels he needs Paul's consent to send him to Jerusalem, but Paul doesn't fall for that. He appeals to Caesar.
- King Agrippa (Agrippa II) and Bernice (his sister) come to salute Festus.
- v. 16 Festus: it is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die without a chance to face his accusers & defend himself → ^{implicitly} ~~expressly~~ condemning the actions of Pilate his pred.
- Agrippa asks to hear Paul, and Festus convenes a great trial, so Agrippa can tell him what to write to Caesar
- Ch 26. Paul recounts his persecution of the Christians and his vision & conversion. Paul gives a different account here in Ch. 26 that that in ch. 9 or 22. Paul's story was much identified with by Joseph Smith, and this fact of the differences in accounts is another interesting parallel. The first account was to Christians (presumably Luke & probably others), the second to the Jews, and now to the Romans (and the Jewish king).
- Agrippa says "almost" thou persuadest me → better translated "did you think to persuade me so quickly?" He is not almost persuaded. The common opinion is that he took his sister to wife. Sided in war w/ Rome & against Jews
- Ch 27. Paul's voyage to Rome involves a shipwreck. Paul foretells the shipwreck, and the attempted desertion of the sailors. Paul thus saves everyone, and thus the centurion spares the prisoners when the choice comes to execute them or risk their escape. They all make it safe to land as Paul predicted.
- Ch. 28 Paul takes no harm from a snake bite, and heals the sick of the island. He refuses their offer to worship Paul arrives in Rome and summons the leaders of the synagogue. No Jewish leaders had written to them. He converts some & not others. He quotes Isaiah 6 → they see & don't see, etc.
- The legal question is not mentioned → why? Legend says Paul was released, and preached in Spain before being later arrested, sent to Rome & beheaded