

The Book of Acts Lesson 12 3Q 2018

Confinement in Caesarea

By Tim Jennings (announcements at end)

SABBATH

Read second paragraph, “In all the hearings...” Was Paul arrested because he did wrong?

Why was Paul arrested if he didn’t do anything wrong?

Paul was effective in promoting a message of truth that was threatening to change societal structure, which threatened certain people’s power-base.

What is your assessment of how Paul was treated?

Do you think this is likely to happen in society today?

How was Martin Luther King Jr. treated by many in our society? Why was he treated the way he was?

What would happen in the Middle East today if a person tried to convert Muslims to Christianity? Why?

What does it reveal when people respond with anger, hostility, violence to religious views that are different from their own?

If you were conference president how would you recommend handling a church member, who is not a church employee, that is teaching ideas which challenge the current orthodoxy?

Is it more important to ensure that there is no controversy, no dispute, that the membership is in a state of tranquil peace, or is it healthy to allow open debate, discussion, exploration of divergent ideas even if those ideas upset some of the members?

I found this quote in a book *Counsels to Writers and Editors* see if you agree or disagree with it:

Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths. This has been true in the history of the church in all ages, and thus it will continue to the end. **But as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of the truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God's word, and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures. They become conservative,** and seek to avoid discussion. {CW 38.3}

The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people, should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves, to make sure that they have the truth, **there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition, and worship they know not what.** {CW 39.1}

I have been shown that many who profess to have a knowledge of present truth, know not what they believe. They do not understand the evidences of their faith. They have no just appreciation of the work for the present time. When the time of trial shall come, **there are men now preaching to others, who will find, upon examining the positions they hold, that there are many things for which they can give no satisfactory reason.** Until thus tested, they knew not their great ignorance. {CW 39.2}

And there are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe, but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. When separated from those of like faith, and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth. **Certain it is that there has been among us a departure from the living God, and a turning to men, putting human wisdom in place of divine.** {CW 39.3}

And what is human wisdom? Would it be the way humans consider right and wrong, justice, law—the imperial law concept and how this idea has infected our theology?

And thus, there are moves afoot in the church to silence controversy, voices which challenge the orthodox view—why? Because of human law construct, human tradition, believing falsely that it is right to use authoritarian measures to enforce compliance—such as compliance committees?

Yesterday Dr. George Graves sent me an article which was written in the aftermath of the 1888 Minneapolis GC and I want to share some of it with you and get your thoughts:

Do not any one think that..we have got all the truth we need; [that] we have got the main pillar of the faith, and if we are right there we have no need to trouble ourselves that we may understand the truth ourselves. One minister who has been in the work for years and years, says, “Now, Sister White, have we got to understand ourselves? There are reasons that are from the Bible in regard to the points of our faith; why can’t we take them, as others have prepared them, and then we need not take that time; and we proclaim it. [What is the minister asking? For someone to prepare Bible studies on point of doctrine that others can take and go out and present in a cookie-cutter like way, without themselves really understanding the reasons, just presenting what another has prepared.] We believe these to be men of God (and there was one man mentioned). Don’t you believe that he was inspired of God?” No, I do not. I do not believe any such thing. I believe that God has given him a

work to do. And if there is a man or a woman who is not consecrated and devoted to God every hour, I do not care who they are, the enemy will slip in some of self—weave it right in, his peculiar traits, his peculiar ideas—and the first thing, he is molding others, he is putting his fashion upon those who are around him. **It is dangerous business to exalt man, or to lean upon man, to make flesh our arm.** What we want is to lean upon the arm that has been stretched out for us to lean upon, and that is the Lord God of Israel, and in Him we may trust... MS56-1890 [This is one of the reasons I always say that I am not here to tell anyone what to think, or to do your thinking for you, but to challenge you to think for yourself and understand things for yourself]

Now, here you are in this school. Brother Waggoner may present the truth before you. You may say that the matter that he presents is truth. **But then what will you do? You must go to the Scriptures for yourselves.** You must search them with humble hearts. **If you are just full of prejudice and your own preconceived opinions, and if you entertain the idea that there is nothing for you to know, and that you know all that is worth knowing, you will not get any benefit here.** But if you come like children, you want to learn all there is for you—if the God from heaven has sent anything for me, I want it. The Lord of Heaven has led the mind of man to make a speciality of studying the Scriptures, and when those Scriptures are presented, **He has given me reasoning powers. I can see the evidence just as well as he can see it; I can find the evidence as he finds it. I can go out and speak the truth because I know it is the truth.** And I do know that it is the truth, and therefore I can present it—not as the product of somebody else's mind, but I can present it as the woman of Samaria, as she bore testimony that she had found the Messiah. They flocked out to hear Him, and they said, We know for ourselves, we have seen Him, we have heard Him for ourselves; and we know that this is the Christ. MS56-1890

Cannot you question and investigate with one another? Indeed you can. But the great trouble is that self is so large in us all that just as soon as we begin to investigate, **we will do it in such an unchristian manner.** It has been done here in Battle Creek; it was done in Minneapolis; it has been done in many other places. **God is not in any such work as that at all; it is the devil that is in such work as that.** We want to come to the Scriptures with humble hearts. If God has a work for us we are ready for it, and we want to know that it is the truth for ourselves, and thus you [will] be driven to your Bibles. You must be driven to them... MS56-1890 [And I have thought about this, studying different views with people and I have discovered that when people study as equals they are more likely to be open, understanding, willing to give the other's view consideration. But when the study is done with a hierarchical structure (someone represents a ruling body or position, counsel of Trent, or conference president or committee or a pastor, an inherent sense of ruling authority) then the study becomes unchristian, critical, defensive, unwilling to hear openly and honestly the position of the other—thoughts?]

But I speak of these men that they may know, that they may understand, what is truth; and if **they will not hear, if they will keep away, just as the ministers tell the congregations, the**

stay-away argument: Don't go to hear. Now, you want to hear everything. If he has got error, we want to know it, we want to understand it, those that are in prominent positions, and then we want to investigate for ourselves. We want to know that it is truth; and if it is truth, brethren, those children in the Sabbath School want it, and every soul of them need it. This is what we want. MS56-1890

Wow—do you see these same problems as we have faced the last 8 years are not new problems. They are the age-old problems that advancing truth has always faced. But the next time a member of the SDA church tells you someone in leadership told them the “stay-away argument—don’t go hear” you could share this quote with them and suggest, then that is what you really need to go hear.

Does this mean then, that we set no standards, that we don’t draw a line anywhere and we let any idea be presented in our churches and engage in controversial discussion over any topic?

Consider this quotation from the same author in a book called *Confrontation*:

We are not to attend their circles, neither are our ministers to engage in controversy with them [spiritualists]. They are of that class specified whom we should not invite into our houses or bid them Godspeed. We have to compare their teachings with the revealed will of God. **We are not to engage in an investigation of spiritualism.** God has investigated this for us, and told us definitely that a class would arise in the last days who would deny Christ who has purchased them with His own blood. **The character of spiritualists is so plainly described that we need not be deceived by them.** If we obey the divine injunction we shall have no sympathy with spiritualists, however smooth and fair may be their words. {Con 91.1}

What is the underlying principle that would be in practice here that would say, in this case it is not necessary to investigate spiritualism nor engage in discussion with the spiritualists?

If someone came along today and suggested that we can achieve better spiritual enlightenment by putting LSD in our communion wafers, would this be something we should investigate and have serious discussion about? Why or why not?

When the evidence has been sufficiently revealed that a certain course or action is destructive or harmful, then spending more time on that subject debating it or arguing for or against it only opens the door to confusion, distracts from other truths and prevents advancement in other lines of understanding.

Does this then mean we don’t deal with anyone who is caught up in spiritualism? Would this mean we would have the discussion with people of Haiti or other cultures where spiritualism is practiced? Or would we need to, as missionaries, evangelists, give such potential converts evidence of the truth and evidence of the errors in which they have been steeped?

So, what then is meant on not engaging with spiritualists?

So, how do we deal with people who hold different views than us?

I really like Romans 14:5 let every person be fully persuaded in their own mind, and draw lines only where it is abundantly clear that a line of investigation is already proven to be harmful or destructive.

Haydin Piper, an online listener, sent in this quote from the book *The Desire of Ages* p. 509.

Today in the religious world there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion. **They desire to make our Lord the ruler of the kingdoms of this world, the ruler in its courts and camps, its legislative halls, its palaces and market places. They expect Him to rule through legal enactments, enforced by human authority.** Since Christ is not now here in person, **they themselves will undertake to act in His stead, to execute the laws of His kingdom.** The establishment of such a kingdom is what the Jews desired in the days of Christ. They would have received Jesus, had He been willing to establish a temporal dominion, **to enforce what they regarded as the laws of God,** and to make them the expositors of His will and the agents of His authority. But He said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” John 18:36. He would not accept the earthly throne. {DA 509.2}

Do you think this is the method we should utilize? Should we seek to legislate our beliefs and enforce them?

This is what Sharia law wants to do...it is also what some Christians want to do in regard to abortion law—force everyone to abide by their view and enforce it with the courts.

How is Christ supposed to rule? In the hearts of people by the reproduction of His character and the practice of His methods, which are? Truth, presented in love, and leaving others free!

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, which is speaking of the argument made by a lawyer against Paul: “Then, he went on...”

Were any of the charges true? It was true that Paul was a leader of those who followed Jesus.

Was Paul an agitator who was fomenting unrest among the Jews? Well from the Jewish leadership’s perspective it was true; Paul was upsetting their way of thinking and the esteem in which they were held by the people. But, Paul was NOT inciting rebellion against Rome, just the opposite.

So, what did the lawyer do? He twisted things, he took a fact, Paul was causing agitation in the minds of the Jews about their traditional understanding of Scripture, challenging them to reinterpret things, which upset the Jewish authorities. They took this fact and made it appear that such teachings were the

reason the Jews were so unruly and there was so much rebellion against Rome.

What do you think of the third allegation—that Paul attempted to defile the Jewish temple?

This last charge is quite interesting—why did the Jews make this charge against Paul?

Why did it matter to them?

Was the temple important to their power base in any way? Was the temple used in any way to influence or control the people?

Who were the actual defilers of the temple? Do you remember Jesus cleansing the temple—why and from what?

Here is a quote from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. **From eternal ages it was God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God.** Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple. God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul. But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. **They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts.** In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,—from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." Malachi 3:1-3. {DA 161.1}

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. **No man can of himself cast out the evil throng that have taken possession of the heart. Only Christ can cleanse the soul temple.** But He will not force an entrance. He comes not into the heart as to the temple of old; but He says,

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him." Revelation 3:20. He will come, not for one day merely; for He says, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; . . . and they shall be My people." "He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." 2 Corinthians 6:16; Micah 7:19. **His presence will cleanse and sanctify the soul, so that it may be a holy temple unto the Lord**, and "an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephesians 2:21, 22. {DA 161.2}

Why did the Jews allege that Paul was defiling the temple? What did Paul and Jesus threaten?

Jesus and Paul were trying to move people past metaphor and object lesson to the reality of God, to heal hearts and minds. But the leaders didn't want this because they preferred their selfishness, thus they obstructed the higher order thinking.

What about today, could people be threatened in leadership today when we try and teach people that the sanctuary is a metaphor to heal hearts and minds and is not to be taken literally?

What about the nation of Israel itself, could some get offended if we point out they were to be teachers to the entire world, but have no avenue of salvation different than the rest of humanity?

MONDAY

Read fifth paragraph, "In the end, Festus..." Do we ever get confused when we present truth and find it doesn't win the day?

This paragraph points out that Festus was not interested in truth, he was interested in profit and advancement for himself. Thus, arguing the merits of the facts would have little impact on Festus.

Could this happen today, that we present truths to people in church leadership and expect an outcome based on the merits of the facts and evidence, but the people who are reviewing our concerns have other agendas? Like their own profit, perhaps employment, or books they have written which oppose the new view, or position, or authority, or some other concern and thus are not primarily interested in the truth itself?

How do you handle it when people accuse you falsely?

Here are some steps in dealing with false accusations:

- first pray—ask God for wisdom, discernment, His involvement, intervention, that He will use this as opportunity to advance the kingdom. Ask for patience, ask for a heart to love others, and to act in ways that reveal God's methods and principles. So, first and foremost, pray and align the heart with God. DO NOT react reflexively, pause and talk to God.
- Consider who is making the accusation—not every accusation needs answering, some are best ignored. Some are best answered not with words, but with actions, the actions of patient waiting and kindness. Sometimes answering the allegation only brings more attention to it, and

diverts from the truth. Other times answering only gives the enemies of truth more fuel to attack you. Jesus said “don’t cast your pearls before swine...”

- Asks or inquire how they came to believe this, upon what they base their accusations, from where did they hear or come to believe such a thing? Many times people come who are responding to rumor, or gossip and have never checked the facts for themselves.
- Try to discern why this is important to them, why do they want to know, why are they accusing you? Understanding their motives gives you insight into what they really want from the encounter.
- Then, ask God gives wisdom several responses are possible:
 - Silence—no answer at all, Jesus did this many times
 - Answer with questions, which Jesus did to the man who asked about the greatest commandment
 - Answer directly, which Daniel did, Jesus, Paul, Peter and others did—at times
 - But always respond with an attitude of love and interest in others.

TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, Tuesday “And now Paul...” The lesson asks what it tells us about outward appearance?

Let’s read Acts chapter 26 (from *The Remedy*)

¹Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to present your case." Paul motioned with his hands for silence and then began his defense:²"King Agrippa, I am thankful that you are here to hear my defense against these allegations of the Jews,³because you know Jewish tradition, custom, and theological controversies. So please be patient as I lay out my case.

⁴"The Jews know very well that I was raised in my own country, and later—in Jerusalem.⁵They have known me for years, and if they are honest, they can confirm that by the strictest standards of our people, I lived as a Pharisee and did everything according to their most severe rules.⁶I am on trial now because I believe that what God promised our ancestors has been fulfilled—⁷the promise our twelve tribes long to see fulfilled as they diligently serve God every day. O King, I am being accused because I believe that this promise has been fulfilled.⁸Why should any of you who know the history of our people find it impossible to believe that God raises the dead back to life?

⁹"Yes, at one time I too believed it was my duty to do everything in my power to oppose Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁰And I did just that in Jerusalem. With the approval and backing of the chief priests, I arrested many of his followers, and when they were executed, I voted for them to die.¹¹I went from synagogue to synagogue, punishing his followers and trying to force them to curse his name. In my vigilance, I even traveled to other cities to persecute them.

¹²"I was on one of these trips, heading to Damascus with arrest warrants from the chief priests. ¹³About noon, O King, I was on the road, when a bright light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazed around me and my traveling companions. ¹⁴We all instantly fell to the ground, and I heard a voice from heaven say to me in Aramaic, 'Oh Saul, why are you persecuting me? Isn't it difficult for you to kick against the thorns?'

¹⁵"I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The voice replied, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶Now stand up, for I have come to you to commission you, as my ambassador, to witness what you have seen of me, and what I will yet show to you. ¹⁷Don't be afraid, for I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them ¹⁸to open their minds to the light of truth, and lead them out of the darkness of lies about me—and thus free them from Satan's power and unite them with God—so they might have sin and selfishness remit from their hearts, and be among those who are recreated in righteousness through trust in me.'

¹⁹"So, King Agrippa, what was I to do? I did what I believed was right after such a vision from heaven: ²⁰First I went to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem, and then—all over Judea, to Jews and non-Jews alike. I told everyone they should turn away from selfishness, love God with their whole heart, and demonstrate their love for God by their acts of service to help others. ²¹That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and are trying to kill me. ²²But God has been watching over me to this very day, and has brought me here to tell the truth about him to small and great alike. I am only teaching what the prophets and Moses said would happen—²³that the Messiah would be rejected, suffer, die, and then be the first to rise from the dead to provide the Remedy to his own people and all peoples of the world."

²⁴When Festus heard this, he interrupted Paul's defense: "Are you crazy, Paul?" he shouted. "You've studied yourself insane!"

²⁵Paul calmly replied, "I am not insane, most honorable Festus. What I am saying is not only true, it is also reasonable. ²⁶The king is familiar with all of this, so I am presenting this to him freely, without the need to lay the groundwork for each point. I believe he is aware of all the events that have transpired, because it all happened very publicly. ²⁷King Agrippa, you believe what the prophets have written, don't you? Surely, you do."

²⁸Agrippa answered, "Do you think you can convert me to be a Christian in such a short time?"

²⁹Paul smiled, "No matter how long it takes, I pray to God that not only you, but everyone here listening will become what I am, except retain your freedom, of course."

³⁰At this, the king, governor, Bernice, and those sitting with them stood up³¹and left the room. While they were talking amongst themselves, they said, "This man hasn't done anything deserving of death or imprisonment."

³²Agrippa said to Festus, "If he hadn't appealed to Caesar, he could have been set free."

What do you think of Paul's argument?

What authority did Paul cite? Both Scripture and His own experience, he recounted how his experience was consistent with what was taught in Scripture.

What do you think of Paul's appeal to Caesar was it a good choice?

From last week's lesson on FRIDAY, read the last three paragraphs: "Had the leaders in the church..."

What does this suggest about the Sovereignty of God?

Does it suggest anything about God's methods?

Does it have any bearing on what is happening in the church and the world today?

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

September 14,15, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be Keynote Speaker at Crossroads Community Church in Georgetown, Delaware.

September 27-29, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Mega National Conference of the American Association of Christian Counselors in Dallas, TX

September 30-Oct 2, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at NAD of SDA Mental Health Education retreat for pastors at Kettering, OH.

October 19, 20, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar at Camelback SDA church, in Phoenix, AZ.

November 9,10 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Houston, TX, in conjunction with the AACC

December 1, 2018: Dr. Jennings will be doing an Aging Brain seminar in Dallas, TX. Organized by the Arlington SDA church.

January 4-6, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking for the Florida Conference of SDA Women's Convention in Orlando, FL.

February 2-3, 2019: Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO.

*In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church
Mental Health Matters Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing*

Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018

Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family.

The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018

In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us.

Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018

Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt.

The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018

Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew!