

## Three Listeners To A Sermon

Acts 25:23

**Acts 25:23** - So, on the next day when Agrippa came together with Bernice amid great pomp, and entered the auditorium accompanied by the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in.

### **Introduction:**

- A. After the apostle Paul had made his defense before Governor Felix, Felix left Paul in prison for two years and was then succeeded by Porcius Festus. Following this, when Paul appeared before Festus, he found that the only way that he could seek justice was to appeal to Caesar.
- B. However, before he was sent to Rome, the Jewish king Agrippa came to Caesarea with his wife Bernice and asked to hear Paul. Read TEXT. Of course, the peerless Paul, as he pled his case before King Herod Agrippa II, took advantage of the occasion to preach Christ to the ones at that gathering, giving an account of his past life and conversion to the Lord.
- C. It's interesting to look in the account that follows and see the reactions of TITLE.

### **I. The Reaction Of Festus**

[Festus doggedly dodged the emphasis of Paul's sermon by accusing the apostle of insanity in Acts 26:24]

**Acts 26:24** - While Paul was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad."

A. Some today are like Festus in trying to discredit the one who preaches the gospel

- 1. But they did the same thing to John the Baptist and to Jesus - Matt. 11:18-19

**Matthew 11:18-19** - "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon!' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

- 2. However, such rationalizations still don't change the truth!

B. Today, people make all kinds of prejudicial statements to divert attention from the truth

- 1. "You're too narrow-minded!"
- 2. "You don't have enough love!"
- 3. "That's just what your little group teaches!"
- 4. Yet, these won't alter what God says about any matter, because in spite of what a lot of people think, the Bible still teaches certain things:
  - a. We must believe in Christ to be saved - Jn. 8:24

**John 8:24** - "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

b. Folks in religions which reject Jesus as God's son are lost

c. We must repent of sin to receive forgiveness - Acts 3:19

**Acts 3:19** - "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

d. Those who continue in sin will not inherit the kingdom of God

e. We must be baptized to wash away sin - Acts 22:16

**Acts 22:16** - 'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'

f. People who are not baptized are not in fellowship with God

C. Everyone needs to realize that when God has spoken, it does no good to reject or dismiss the messenger of His word, because that word will still abide forever - Matt. 24:35, Jn. 12:48  
**Matthew 24:35** - "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

**John 12:48** - "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

## II. *The Reaction Of Bernice*

[Bernice must have complacently and indifferently through the whole speech as if it were tiring, because so far as the text is concerned, she apparently said and did absolutely nothing - Acts 26:30-31]

**Acts 26:30-31** - The king stood up and the governor and Bernice, and those who were sitting with them, and when they had gone aside, they began talking to one another, saying, "This man is not doing anything worthy of death or imprisonment."

A. A lot of people imitate the unconcern of Bernice today - Heb. 2:1

**Hebrews 2:1** - For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.

1. Why was she so seemingly cool and unresponsive?
2. We don't know for sure because the Bible itself doesn't say much about her, but history tells us that she was not only Agrippa's wife but also his sister, so they were living together in an incestuous relationship
3. Very possibly, then, she knew that she was in sin and didn't want to hear anything that would make her uncomfortable-- but this attitude is a very foolish one in view of eternity and judgment to come - Heb. 9:27

**Hebrews 9:27** - And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

B. People are sometimes heard to say, "I don't need all that religious stuff"—but everyone needs these things:

1. Jesus Christ - Jn. 14:6

**John 14:6** - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

2. The gospel of Christ - Rom. 1:16

**Romans 1:16** - For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

3. Obedience to Christ - Heb. 5:8-9

**Hebrews 5:8-9** - Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,

C. How terrible it is to realize that many will be lost simply because they failed to manifest a concern in things of a spiritual nature - Matt. 16:26

**Matthew 16:26** - "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

## III. *The Reaction Of Agrippa*

[Agrippa seemed to be of a different disposition, gracious to Paul and listening courteously with interest to the lesson; yet at the conclusion of the sermon we read in Acts 26:28--To which we see the response in Acts 26:29]

Acts 26:28-29 - Agrippa replied to Paul, "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian."  
29 And Paul said, "I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains."

- A. Today, many are trying to soothe their consciences by “almost” being a Christian, yet they’re still lost because they’re only “almost persuaded,” and therefore keep on waiting—not far from the kingdom, but not in it - Mk. 12:34

Mark 12:34 - When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.

1. Some may be close to the kingdom, but we need to remember the old saying, “Close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades”
  2. It’s not enough just to be near the kingdom
  3. We need to be in it!
- B. Many people have attended the services of the Lord’s church in the past, heard the gospel preached, realized their needs, and maybe even thought about responding, but haven’t yet obeyed—what will happen to all who don’t obey?” - 2 Thess. 1:7-9

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 - and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

- C. Do we have any Agrippas here today who are “almost persuaded”? If you’re one, why not just go ahead and do what Peter told the folks on Pentecost to do - Acts 2:38

Acts 2:38 - Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Conclusion:**

- A. Don’t let the angel of death or the Lord arrive and find you rejecting the gospel like Festus, negligent and indifferent like Bernice, or even “almost” a Christian like Agrippa.
- B. Why not become a child of God now, while you have the time and opportunity?