

**CLOSE TO HEAVEN, BUT LOST
HEAD KNOWLEDGE BUT NOT HEART
ACTS 26:1-29**

Introduction

This is the fifth and final sermon in this series of sermons. We have looked previously at four individuals who were **CLOSE TO HEAVEN, BUT LOST. The Man Who Walked With Jesus, But Missed Heaven—Judas Iscariot!**

The Moral, Self-Righteous Man Who Walked Away From The Righteousness Of God—The Rich Young Ruler.

The Gambler Who Took His Chances—The Unrepentant Thief On The Cross.

**The Opportunist And Procrastinator—Felix
(He was moved by the Gospel to the point of trembling, but put off a decision for Christ to a more convenient day that never came.)**

Today we look at a man who had a **HEAD KNOWLEDGE BUT NOT HEART**...or we might call him **THE MAN WHO KNEW ALL THE FACTS, BUT DIDN'T KNOW THE SAVIOR.**

Because it was not politically expedient, none of the three judges resolved Paul's case: Felix walked the fence like a cat, Festus found Paul to be as irritating as a festering sore, and Agrippa failed to get a grip on the situation.

I. PAUL'S EFFECTIVE TESTIMONY! (ACTS 26:1-29)

Paul stood in chains before Agrippa just as he stood before Felix **to testify of God's grace in his own life!**

Paul used this difficult situation **to share and witness to what God had done in his life through Jesus Christ!**

When Christ is real in one's life, then sharing what Jesus means is always **a powerful, persuasive testimony!**

The apostle Paul here urged this powerful King to become a Christian!

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Throughout this encounter with King Agrippa, as with anyone else Paul might encounter with the Gospel, all the elements of an effective testimony are seen:

A. Paul Testified Of Jesus Christ Regardless Of The Difficulties Or Consequences It Might Bring To Him Personally!

Proclaiming the Gospel always brings one of two responses from the lost. (**Look at 2 Corinthians 2:14-16**)

- 1. Some Will Accept The Gospel By Repenting Toward God And Having Faith Toward The Lord Jesus Christ In Their Lives!**
- 2. On The Other Hand, The Vast Majority Will Respond With Rejection And Rebellion!**

But what we need to realize is that the results belong to God! Our assignment is to preach the Gospel so that all people will be brought either to receive Him or reject Him.

B. Paul Urged His Hearers To Receive Christ Whether They Responded Rightly Or Not!

2 Corinthians 5:11—"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;"

2 Corinthians 5:20—"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

Acts 18:4—"And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks."

C. Paul Pressed On No Matter What Others Might Think Or Say! (Verses 24-26)

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God told the prophet Jeremiah to be a bold witness in the face of those who would oppose him!!

Jeremiah 1:17—“Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.”

Paul was that kind of witness too! *1 Thessalonians 2:1-4*
God will honor such a testimony!

PAUL’S EFFECTIVE TESTIMONY!

II. HISTORY’S RECORDED TESTIMONY! (Vs. 26)

A. The Testimony From Calvary!

**1. The Scripture That Was Fulfilled!
(Isaiah 53 + many others)**

There were 29 Old Testament prophecies fulfilled the day of Christ’s crucifixion dealing with his betrayal, trial, death, and his burial!

These prophecies were by many different voices during the five centuries from 1000 B.C. to 500 B.C., yet all of them were literally fulfilled in Jesus in one 24 hour period of time!

2. The Grace That Was Displayed!

He prayed for the very ones who crucified Him!
Luke 23:34—“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

3. The Testimony From The Centurion!

Mark 15:39—“Truly this man was the Son of God.”

B. The Testimony From The Empty Tomb! (Vs. 6-8)

A tomb that was securely guarded by more than one soldier ends up empty! How do you explain that away?

C. The Testimony From The Witnesses. (1 Corinthians 15:5-8)

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D. The Testimony From Paul. (Acts 26:9-18)

AGRIPPA KNEW THAT THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS WAS HISTORICALLY UNDENIABLE!

III. THE SCRIPTURE’S FULFILLED TESTIMONY! (Vs 27)

Paul’s question placed Agrippa on the horns of a dilemma. If he said “yes,” then he would have to acknowledge Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecies. To say “no” would have put him at odds with the Jews.

IV. AGRIPPA’S FAILING TESTIMONY. (Vs 28)

The Invitational Hymn written by Philip P. Bliss in page 379 of our hymnal says it best.

*“Almost persuaded” now to believe;
“Almost persuaded” Christ to receive;
Seems now some soul to say,
“Go, Spirit, go Thy way;
Some more convenient day On Thee I’ll call.”
“Almost persuaded,” come, come today;
“Almost persuaded,” turn not away;
Jesus invites you here,
Angels are lingering near,
Prayers rise from hearts so dear, Oh wander come.
“Almost persuaded” harvest is past!
“Almost persuaded” doom comes at last!
Almost cannot avail;
Almost is but to fail;
Sad, sad, that bitter wail, “Almost,” but lost.*

CONCLUSION

Look at verse 29.

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Matthew Henry said of this verse:

"Many are almost persuaded to be Christians, who are not quite persuaded; they are under strong convictions of their duty, and of the excellence of the ways of God, yet do not pursue their convictions."

How about you friend? How persuaded are you? Are you a Christian?

Or will you remain close to heaven, but lost?