

# ***“Our Faith is Reasonable!”***

***Acts 25-28***

**Intro.** – The apostle Paul had been in prison for 2 yrs. Felix, the governor, who had him detained, was replaced by Festus (spelled same as Ken Curtis, on “Gunsmoke”). He was a man with a better reputation. The Jewish leaders badgered Festus concerning Paul because they wanted him dead. Knowing a fair trial in Jerusalem would be impossible, Paul appealed his case to Caesar. Festus had no choice, since Paul was a Roman citizen, but to send him to Rome.

This wasn’t Festus’ only problem. He did not know what crime to charge Paul with for such a notable trial. It was just then, that Festus received a welcomed visit from King Agrippa:

Acts 25:23 – 26:1

Paul gave a masterful account of his conversion and resulting life:

Acts 26:24-28

Listen, if you have convictions for TRUTH (God’s Word), some people are going to tell you, you’ve lost your mind. When Christianity affects the way we think and behave every day, people of the world will react like Festus – “you’re out of your mind!”

Illustrate this by what the message of the media/culture is today. If we take the Bible seriously, take Christianity to heart, what are we automatically tagged? Wackos, those who bomb abortion clinics or “fundamentalist extremist.” Note with me how the Apostle responded = calm and confident:

*Purpose: to review why our faith is reasonable*

Being committed to Christ and His Church is the most sane and rational way of life. It’s the unbeliever and the uncommitted who aren’t thinking clearly. Paul was and we must be confident because of the following:

## **I Our Faith is TRUE**

- i.e. our faith is based upon historical fact = 26:25 = “...*I utter words of truth and rationality.*”
- skeptics suggest Christianity is “anti-intellectual” or what Mark Twain insinuated when he wrote, “Faith is believing what you know ain’t so.”
- lot of people think science alone deals wit facts and that Christianity deals only with ethics..

### **A. Christianity is Historically True**

1. The facts concerning Jesus are a matter of public record – He lived at a definite point on the globe... He died on a real cross... He was buried in a real tomb... His resurrection from the dead is one of the most documented literal/actual events of history...
2. Apart from Scripture – we have more historical data on Jesus that we do on Alexander the Great, William Shakespeare or any other historical figure...
3. Check the latest resources and you will find more data on Jesus Christ than any other historical figure... and rightly so!
4. What changed the apostles? What changed Peter from a thrice denying coward to a fireball servant of the Lord? What changed James, ½ bro. of Jesus who one time questioned the sanity of Jesus, but eventually became a leader of the NT Church? What changed Paul from the Pharisee of Pharisees to the Apostle of the Gentiles?
  - two words: THE RESURRECTION... If one will not accept the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, they must reject all other historical fact surrounding Him.

### **B. Christianity is Philosophically True**

1. 26:8 – Paul asked, “Why is it considered incredible... if God does raise the dead?”
2. Paul saying you have to believe that either you’re here by creation/design or by accident:
  - a. if by creation = the God Who spoke into existence, life, can certainly raise the dead!
  - b. if by accident = must believe in a series of “coincidences that go beyond any imagination.
3. Illus. – several yrs ago on National Public Radio (NPR) report on a new theory of man’s origin called “Directed Panspermia.” This is related to the theory of origin called “Panspermia.” = our

planet was hit by sperm and found to be fertile soil because of water... This new theory = aliens sent spaceships to earth full of life seeds planted in the fertile wet soil of earth...

4. Who comes up with this stuff?! If some of these scientist/intellec[t]s ever do go nuts, how are you and I ever going to know the difference?!
5. Here's my point – if people are so willing to buy into this reasoning so easily, then why is it so difficult to believe the God Who created the Universe can also raise the dead?

### C. Christianity is Biblically True

1. 26:27 = “*King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets?*” i.e. how do you explain the OT predictions about Jesus the Christ coming true if Christianity is not historically factual?
2. With all modern devices at our disposal, we still can't accurately predict (e.g. weather), BUT, Bible accurately predicted over 60 specific events surrounding Christ' life, hundreds of years before and did it with 100% accuracy!
3. Illus. – Dr. Peter Stoner (chair. Dept. Astronomy, Mathematics & Engineering, College of Pasadena, CA) worked with 600 students in applying principles of probability to Bible prophecy. They took eight prophecies from OT concerning Christ's and estimated the chances of one man's life fulfilling all eight. Results = one in ten to 32 power or 1 to 10 with 32 zeroes behind it.

Our faith is reasonable, because it is TRUE – When in doubt remember it is history./phil./biblically true!

## II Our Faith WORKS

### A. Faith Without Works

1. James 1:20-26 = faith without works is useless or dead...
2. Not to suggest our works save... it is saying our response to being saved ought to be fruit bearing..

### B. Faith Works in Practical Life

1. One of the acid tests of one's belief is its effectiveness: e.g.
  - Illus. – tourist in Chicago was aghast when his cab driver drove right through red light. “Hey! That light was red,” he said. “Not to worry,” said the driver, “My brother does it all the time.” Came to 2<sup>nd</sup> red light & cabby cruised right through. “That's dangerous!” said the tourist, “You're going to get us killed!” “Don't worry, my brother does it all the time,” said the cabby. Then they came to a green light and cabby stopped. Tourist said, “Hey, it's green, what are you doing?” “I know,” said the driver, “But you never know when my brother might be coming through!”
2. You see, skeptics have tried to explain away Christianity as some kind of psychological crutch.
3. Bottom line is – Christianity works = lives are transformed, fellowship with God is restored and Satan is sent packing. Thus, the Gospel of Jesus Christ really is the POWER of God unto...

## III Our Faith is NEEDED

- mood of modern man = if you're young, intelligent and confident you don't need Lord or His Church!
- all people regardless of age, financial/social status need the Lord
- Acts 26:17-18 (read)
- Illus. – little boy had an uncle who was atheist... Told uncle their dog just gave birth to atheistic puppies. When uncle came a week later to visit he said, “I want to see those puppies.” When the boy showed them to his uncle, the uncle asked, “What kind of dogs did you say these puppies were?” Little boy said, “Those are Christian puppies!” “I thought you said they were atheist puppies?” the uncle shot back. “Responding with a smile, the boy said, “That's before they got their eyes open!”
- unbeliever has eyes closed to spiritual truths and Jesus alone opens our eyes. Because of this, our faith is needed – WE NEED JESUS!

### A. To Conquer Evil

1. Jesus also sent Paul to turn people “from the dominion of Satan to God (Acts 26:18).

2. Sin is addictive and Satan is powerful – the drunk of the urban slum and the preppy/indulgent youth in the wealthy suburbs both desperately need Jesus!

B. To Cleanse Us from Guilt

1. Albert Speer was interviewed on Good Morning America few yrs back:
  - a. it was a most interesting interview. Speer was one of Hitler's technological geniuses... Only 1 out of 24 war criminals tried at Nuremburg admitted their guilt. Guess who it was?
  - b. David Hartman asked, "You said guilt can never be forgiven. Do you still feel that way? "I still carry the burden of what happened to millions of people during Hitler's lifetime, and I can't get rid of it."
2. A few weeks after this interview, Speer died.
  - a. how he needed to hear Isaiah 1:18 "*Though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.*"
  - b. only the righteousness of Jesus can cleanse us from guilt!

**Conclusion:** Chapters 27-28 reveal Paul, patiently and faithfully serving Christ. Such brethren and friend is the essence of "Back to the Basics" = faithfulness and perseverance!

Sociologist Daniel Yankelovich in his book *The Rules*, states, youth today being trained in philosophy of self-actualization. Such is resulting in the lack of commitment and perseverance. "Our generation is inclined to drop anything once it becomes unpleasant or avoid any responsibility that hints at a long term commitment."

Glen Wolfe is a good illus. of this. Glen has been married 25 times (the longest 5 yrs. & shortest 27 days). Asked why he bothered to get married and why not just live together, Glen said, "Oh, no that would be sin!"

Back to the Basics = perseverance and faithfulness to Christ and His Church. It means accepting God's will and crucifying self daily. Let's do it, brethren. Let's get Back to the Basics. Why? Because our faith is reasonable!