

Acts 26:1-8

Introduction

There is nothing like a good courtroom drama for suspense.

The year: c. AD 60.

The place: The palace of Herod Agrippa II in Caesarea by the Sea.

The defendant: The Apostle Paul has been in jail for two years.

Paul's case has been referred to King Agrippa by the Roman Governor, Festus, who confesses he cannot understand the charges against Paul and why Paul keeps talking about "a dead man named Jesus whom Paul claimed was alive" (**Acts 25:19**).

Here is the challenge for so many people: Jesus Christ raised from the dead.

Paul's explanation to King Agrippa is very simple. He affirms that he shares in the hope of what God had promised to His people.

Summary: In Acts 26:1-8, Paul begins the presentation of his defense before King Agrippa and asks the fundamental question: "Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?"

1. Reasons to Doubt

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is still an issue for people today. Unbelief always has a thousand excuses. Some people refuse to believe that God raises the dead because they have never seen it happen and they only believe what they see. Others say, "I cannot do it and I do not know anyone who can do it, therefore it cannot possibly happen"

The issue is not fundamentally intellectual or scientific, as if we had to somehow understand how the dead could be raised. In the end, the problem is theological. Many people simply do not believe what God has said.

Is it incredible to believe that God raises the dead?

If God is who He is, why can He not raise the dead?

2. Biblical Testimony

The gospel accounts are absolutely clear. Christ rose from the dead.

Early on the Sunday morning, a group of women set out for the tomb of Jesus and came there at early dawn.

When they arrived, to their great surprise they found the tomb open and the body of Jesus gone. Quickly they returned to the other disciples to tell them the news.

John and Peter ran to the tomb. They found that the body was gone but the grave clothes were lying exactly where they had been placed on Friday.

Not long after that Jesus appeared to Mary. Then to the women. Then to Peter.

Then to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Then to the eleven disciples.

A week later Jesus appeared to Thomas (**John 20:28**). Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep (**1 Cor 15:6**). Quickly the word spread, “He is risen!”

3. Ultimate Question

Is it incredible to believe that God raises the dead? Not if we believe in God!
Will you believe the testimony of God?
If not, no other arguments will suffice. If yes, no other arguments are needed.

What is your objection this morning?

1) We live, we die, and that’s the end.

Against this we have the clear testimony of God’s Word that this life is not the end, but the beginning.

2) No power exists to raise the dead.

Such a view simply rules God out of the picture a priori.

3) God would not interfere with the laws of nature.

God not only created the universe, He also upholds it by His powerful word and works all things to the fulfillment of His glorious purpose in Christ.

4) The resurrection of Jesus is a myth created by the early church to explain away the death of Christ.

It contradicts both the clear teaching of the Bible and the historical accounts.

Against this unbelief stands the promise of Easter: Death is not the end. God is God. God has promised to save His people through the work of His Son. Christ is raised from the dead.

If Christ has truly been raised from the dead, then these things follow as surely as night follows day: If Christ be raised from the dead, all His promises can be trusted. If Christ be raised from the dead, He is alive today. If Christ be raised from the dead, He is alive forevermore and with us now. If Christ be raised from the dead, all things end well for those who trust in Him.

This is the best news of all. If you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ, “all things end well.”

Today may be filled with tears, tomorrow with troubles, and the day after that more difficulties but if you will trust in Jesus, then even when we have to face death, “all things end well.”

Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

If God is God, then He can raise the dead.

Jesus came out of the tomb approx. 2000 years ago.

Stones cannot hold Him, Death cannot keep Him. He is alive forevermore.

There is good news from the graveyard this morning.