

Part II

“Paul’s Heavenly Vision, Conversation, & Response To God in Christ!”

Acts 26:12-23

Paul Continued, “While thus Occupied (Persecuting & Shackling), as I (Paul) Journeyed to Damascus with Authority and Commission (As Orator & Praeco & Procurator) from the Chief Priests (& Sanhedrin), at Midday, O King, Along the Road I Saw (Epiphany) a Light from Heaven, **** Brighter than the Sun, (Shekinah Glory of God) Shining** (All) **Around Me** and Those Who Journeyed with Me. And When We All Had Fallen to the Ground, I (Paul) Heard a Voice Speaking (Theophany) to Me and Saying in the Hebrew Language, ‘Saul, Saul, Why are You Persecuting Me? It Is Hard for You to Kick Against the Goats.’ So I Replied, ‘Who Are You, Lord?’ And He Said, ‘I AM Jesus, Whom You are Persecuting. But Rise and Stand on Your Feet; for I Have Appeared (Epiphany) to You for this Purpose, * to Make You a Minister ^A and a Witness ^B Both: of the Things Which You Have Seen ^A and of the Things Which I Will Yet Reveal to You. ^B I Will Deliver You from the Jewish People, as well as from the Gentiles, to Whom I Now Send You, to Open Their Eyes, ^{1a} in Order to Turn Them from Darkness to Light, ^{1b} and from the Power of Satan to God, ² that They May Receive Forgiveness of Sins ³ and an Inheritance Among Those Who are Sanctified by Faith in Me.’ ⁴ Therefore, King Agrippa, I (Paul) Was Not Disobedient to the Heavenly Vision (Epiphany & Theophany), but Declared First to Those (Jews) in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and Throughout All the Region of Judea, and Then (Second) to the Gentiles, that They Should Repent, ¹ Turn to God, ² and Do Works Befitting Repentance. ⁵ For These Reasons ¹⁻⁵ the Jews (Sanhedrin & Zealots From Asia Minor) Seized Me in the Temple and Tried to Kill Me. Therefore, Having Obtained Help from God to this (very) day, I Stand, ^A Witnessing ^B Both to Small and Great (Everyone), Saying No Other Things Than Those Which the Prophets and Moses Said Would Come (Propesied), that the Christ Would Suffer (& Die), that He Would Be the First to Rise From the Dead, and **Would Proclaim Light ******** to the Jewish People and to the Gentiles (Alike).”

Acts 26:12-23 (NKJV)

Central Question

“What Is Paul Actually Presenting Here To This Formal & Official Audience?”

Central Answer

Paul’s ‘*Apologia Pro Vita Sua*’

“A Complete & Formal Defense of One’s Beliefs, Philosophy, & Worldview!”

NOTE

We Continue Our Study Of Paul’s Presentation – His ‘*Apologia Pro Vita Sua*’
In This 2nd of 3 Parts As We Continue To Look At The Whole of Acts Chapter 26!

Note Again: Formal & Official Setting Of Today’s Audience

So, the Next Day, When King (Herod) Agrippa (II) and (Queen) Bernice Had Come with ‘Great Pomp’, and had entered the Auditorium with the Commanders and the Prominent Men of the City (Caesarea), at (Governor) Festus’ Command Paul was Brought In (Before Them All).

Acts 25:23

I. Paul’s ‘*Apologia Pro Vita Sua*’

F. Heavenly Vision & Conversation

Paul Continued, “While thus Occupied (Persecuting & Shackling), as I (Paul) Journeyed to Damascus with Authority and Commission (As Orator & Praeco & Procurator) from the Chief Priests (& Sanhedrin), at Midday, O King, Along the Road I Saw (Epiphany) a Light from Heaven, **** Brighter than the Sun, (Shekinah Glory of God) Shining** (All) **Around Me** and Those Who Journeyed with Me.”

Acts 26:12-13

Shekinah – The Shining Glory of God

1st The Word Itself – **Shekinah**

Does Not Exist In Scripture!

Q

“So, Why Discuss It At All!”

Shekinah Is A Word Used By **Jewish Rabbi's** Since **400 B.C.**

& **Christian Priests** Since **150 A.D.**

To Describe **God's Divine Presence** “**Dwelling / Residing**” Among Humanity!

“**Mercy Seat**” – Location of **God's Presence** From Heaven's Throne to Earth's Throne

“**Altar of Incense**” – Location of **God's Presence** From Heavenly Altar to Earthly Altar

Exodus 25:17-22, Exodus 30:1-6, & Leviticus Chapter 16

God's Presence in the **Pillar of Cloud** & **Pillar of Fire**

And the **Lord** Went Before **Them** by Day in a **Pillar of Cloud** to Lead the Way,
And by Night in a **Pillar of Fire** to Give **Them** Light, so as to go by Day and Night.

Exodus 13:21

Pillar of Cloud & **Pillar of Fire** Is **God in Christ**

As A Mighty Leader Who Covers **His People** With

His Perfect Presence: His Plan, ¹ **His Prophecy**, ²

His Protection, ³ **His Purity**, ⁴ & **His Purpose** ⁵

Exodus 40:34-38 & Numbers 9:15-23

Pillar of Cloud / **Smoke** of **God's Continuing Presence**

1st Kings 8:10-11, 2nd Chronicles 5:14 – 7:1-2, Isaiah 6:1-5,
Ezekiel Chapters 1 to 10, & Revelation Chapters 8, 14, 15, & 21.

The **Transfiguration of Jesus** & **His Glorious Ascension**

Matthew 17:1-9 & Acts 1:1-11

Christ Is the Glory of God Revealed To **Us** In The **Person** of **Jesus** of **Nazareth**

John 1:1-18 & Hebrews Chapter 1

Our Complete Transformation Accomplished By The **Presence of God's Spirit Dwelling** Within **Us**

Jeremiah 31:31-34 & 32:37-41, Ezekiel 36:22-33, & Hebrews Chapter 8

Finally, To Quote & Freely Add To The Insight of a **Close Friend, Fellow Believer, & Another Scott:**
“There Are **Three Kinds** of **Clouds / Smoke**: **1st Smoke** Is **God's Awesome & Majestic Presence**,
Which Causes **Us** To Bow in Humble Adoration, Praise, & Worship Forever & Ever! The **2nd Smoke**
Is The Prayers of God's People on Earth & Christ's Prayers In Heaven Above, Co-Mingled Together
Before The Throne of God! And The **3rd Smoke** Is God's Final Judgement & Wrath Upon
Evil and **Those Who** Have Ultimately Rejected **God's Perfect Love** in the **Person of Jesus Christ**
The Lord! Now That Is What It Means To Enter Into Holy Smokes!” **Scott Frey**

F. Heavenly Vision & Conversation

“And When **We All** Had Fallen to the Ground, **I (Paul)** Heard a Voice Speaking (Theophany) to Me
and Saying in the Hebrew Language, ‘**Saul, Saul, Why are You Persecuting Me? It Is Hard for You**
to Kick Against the Goats.” **Acts 26:14**

All Falling Down In Homage Before The **Presence** of the ‘**Great I AM**’

Garden of Gethsemane – **John 18:1-9**

Throne Room in Heaven – **Revelation 1:17, 4:10-11, & 5:8**

Kicking Against The Goats

A) **One Pole** Used To Direct Oxen When Plowing A Field

‘**Break Up Your Fallow Ground**’ **Hosea 10:1-12 & Jeremiah 4:1-4**

‘**Take My Yoke Upon You**’ **Matthew 11:25-30**

(Continued Over)

Kicking Against The Goats

B) Two Poles Outlining The Narrow Way You Must Go – Used To Herd & Huband Sheep & Goats
Jacob in Genesis 30:27-43

‘Narrow Is The Way of Holiness’ – Isaiah Chapter 35 & Matthew 7:13-14

F. Heavenly Vision & Conversation

... “So I Replied, ‘Who Are You, Lord?’” And He Said, ‘I AM Jesus, Whom You are Persecuting.’”

Acts 26:15

Identity of ‘Christ’ as One & the Same as the ‘Great I AM’

F. Heavenly Vision & Conversation

“But Rise and Stand on Your Feet; for I Have Appeared (Epiphany) to You for this Purpose,* to Make You a Minister^A and a Witness^B Both: of the Things Which You Have Seen^A and of the Things Which I Will Yet Reveal to You.”^B Acts 26:16

A Minister & Witness In The Power & Likeness of Jeremiah 1:1-10 & Ezekiel 2:1-10

& In The Likeness of the Servant of God, Jesus Christ in Isaiah 42:1-9

Ministers & Witnesses Are Chosen For Ongoing Revelation & Declaration of Truth

“I Will Deliver You from the Jewish People, as well as from the Gentiles, to Whom I Now Send You, to Open Their Eyes, ^{1a} in Order to Turn Them from Darkness to Light, ^{1b} and from the Power of Satan to God, ² that They May Receive Forgiveness of Sins ³ and an Inheritance Among Those Who are Sanctified by Faith in Me.”⁴ Acts 26:17-18

Reaffirming Paul’s Commissioning To The Gentiles To Bring Good News

Acts 13:46-48

The Purpose of Paul’s Gentile Mission of Repentance & Forgiveness

Isaiah 42:5-9 & Colossians 1:9-14

Paul Says, “For This Reason We also, since the day We heard it, do not cease to Pray for You, and to Ask that You May Be Filled with the Knowledge of His Will in All Wisdom and Spiritual Understanding; that You May Walk Worthy of the Lord, Fully Pleasing Him, Being Fruitful in Every Good Work and Increasing in the Knowledge of God; Strengthened with All Might, According to His Glorious Power, for All Patience and Longsuffering with Joy; Giving Thanks to the Father Who Has Qualified Us To Be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in the Light. He Has Delivered Us From the Power of Darkness and Conveyed Us Into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love, In Whom We Have Redemption Through His Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins.”

Colossians 1:9-14

All People Who Turn To God In Faith - Receive An Equal Eternal Inheritance

Galatians 1:11-16b, Ephesians 2:11-22 & 3:1-21

G. Paul’s Immediate & Unwavering Obedience

“Therefore, King Agrippa, I (Paul) Was Not Disobedient to the Heavenly Vision (Epiphany & Theophany), but Declared First to Those (Jews) in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and Throughout All the Region of Judea, and Then (Second) to the Gentiles, that They Should Repent, ¹ Turn to God, ² and Do Works Befitting Repentance.”⁵ Acts 26:19-20

First To The Jews & Second To The Gentiles Paul Presented The Same Gospel of Jesus Christ

Acts 13:14-52, Romans 1:16 & 2:5-11, & Galatians 3:15-29

H. Paul’s Arrest

“For These Reasons ¹⁻⁵ the Jews (Sanhedrin & Zealots From Asia Minor) Seized Me in the Temple and Tried to Kill Me.”

Acts 26:21

Q

“What Is The Main Reason Among These Five Reasons, For The Jewish Authorities Anger & Desire To Arrest & Kill Paul?”

A

That The **Jews** Were No Longer **God's** Only, Special, Chosen, People!
Paul Brought A **Gentile** Into The **Temple** – Making **Gentiles** Co-Equal With **Jews** Before **God**!

Acts 21:27-29

I. Peroration

“A Conclusion of a Speech / Story / Treatise”

Paul Asks For **His Audience** To Judge & To Make A Decision

Concerning **His Defense** & The **Gospel's Message of Invitation** To **Them**!

“Therefore, Having Obtained Help from **God** to this (very) day, **I Stand**, ^A **Witnessing** ^B **Both** to Small and Great (Everyone), Saying No Other Things Than Those Which the Prophets and Moses Said Would Come (Propheesied), that the **Christ Would Suffer (& Die)**, that **He Would Be the First to Rise From the Dead**, and **Would Proclaim Light** ^{***} to the **Jewish People** and to the **Gentiles** (Alike).”

Acts 26:22-23

Prophecy & **Fulfillment** In **Their Hearing** In These ‘Last Days’

Isaiah 49:6, Acts 13:47, & Simeon in Luke 2:25-35

“Let **Us** Enter Into The **Holy of Holies** That **Christ** Has Opened In The Heavens.
Let **Us** Enter By A New & Living Way, Through **His Indwelling Spirit** & **Presence Within Us**.
Let **Us** Be Willing To Break Up Our Fallow Ground, Repenting Of **Our Iniquities** & **Sins**,
& Bask In The **Healing** & **Rest** Of **God's Shekinah Glory**!
Let **Us** Be **His Renewed** & **Transformed Ministers** & **Witnesses** To Those Who
Have Never Known **His Light**, **His Grace**, **His Mercy**, **His Forgiveness**, & **His Love**.
Let **Us** Reach Into The Darkness & Fire, That Gathers All Around Us In These ‘Last Days.’
“That **We** As **The Children Of Light** May Bring To Those Who Are Perishing,
His Perfect Presence Were Indwells:
His Plan, His Prophecy, His Protection, His Purity, & His Purpose!”