

## Acts 25:13-27; “Collision” 2/16/2025

### Review & Intro:

Today’s message is entitled COLLISION.

You’ll remember that Paul was standing trial before Festus, the newly appointed ruler after having been incarcerated for two years under Felix without a verdict. Things appeared to be going south for Paul, so he requested to appear before the emperor, Caesar Nero.

Festus brought Paul before Agrippa to get a better understanding of what charges Festus should send with Paul to Rome. **Agrippa was the grandson of Herod the Great and the son of Herod Agrippa I, who had arrested Peter and killed James.**

Today’s message is front loaded, meaning that we will spend more time on point one than the rest. Additionally, we are looking at one statement that Luke made, that he didn’t have to make, and drawing some insight about his implications. If you look at 25:23 Luke mentions that Agrippa and Bernice arrived with great “pomp” and entourage. It seems clear that Luke is observing and pointing out something on behalf of his readers.

### **I. The Great Conflict: Temporal vs Eternal -25:23** **“great pomp” and entourage.**

The word for “pomp” is the Greek word that we get our word for fantastic. The idea is that they showed up with a great deal of glitz and glamor. Imagine the red-carpet scene at an awards show. You can imagine them dressed in fashion and dripping jewelry. People came out to see them. There would have been a crowd and envying eyes everywhere. It was in some way the display of the lifestyle of the rich and famous but also included the powerful. It was indeed, fantastic, Luke says.

They had all the signs of wealth and power. Things seemed to be going well for them. They were at the apex of their career. I wonder if they thought they had “manifested” it and gladly congratulated themselves for being so enlightened. They had all their cronies with them and created quite a scene.

On the other hand, is Paul. A guy that most likely had a vision problem and was dressed in prisoners’ clothes. He was most likely in chains and by himself.

...(M)ost people nowadays who know anything about Agrippa and Bernice and Festus know of them as persons who for a brief period of time crossed Paul’s path and heard

him speak words which might have brought much blessing to them had they been disposed to pay serious heed to what he said. All these very important people would have been greatly surprised, and not a little scandalized, could they have foreseen the relative estimates that later generations would form of them and of the prisoner who now stood before them to state his case.<sup>1</sup>

**-There were cataclysmic worlds coming into conflict.** There is a collision between the temporal and the eternal; between that which is and that which will be forevermore. This is a conflict of kings and kingdoms. It is a cosmic epic being played out in real time. Most do not see it. They continue on, not knowing that their souls will be required of them. **Ecclesiastes 3:11** tells us that God has set eternity in the hearts of men yet Paul himself reminds us in **Romans 1:21** that men **suppress** the truth they know to be true. Calvin talked about the **sensus divinitatus** or sense of the Divinity. It's the idea that man has an internal innate understanding about his obligation to God. Conscience and creation itself remind men of their mortality and causes them to be guilty before the supreme creator and judge of all.

There is something mystical, animated, even haunted if you want to use that term in the cosmos. The world is not as it seems. There are rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. The world is more **animated** than we think.

The book of Ephesians is full of this type of language:

Ephesians 1 says that God seated Christ "at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion" ([Eph. 1:20-21](#)). Chapter 2 refers to Satan as "the ruler of the kingdom of the air" ([Eph. 2:2](#)). Later, in Ephesians 6:12, "rulers," "authorities," "powers of this dark world," and "spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Paul uses this kind of language to refer to what we might identify as demonic powers. Yet, he is not thinking simply of individual demons who harass or possess people. Rather, he envisions the whole cosmos as permeated and influenced by powers that we might call supernatural. Yet, these powers might also include cultural, economic, and political forces, the kinds of forces that shape our lives each day (see, for example, [1 Corinthians 2:8](#)).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce, FF -Acts, p459

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from: <https://www.theologyofwork.org/the-high-calling/daily-reflection/who-are-rulers-and-authorities-heavenly-places-and-why-do-they-matter>

**John 1** gives us an indication of the type of thing behind the normal birth narrative of Christ. On the outside, it seemed as though there was a teenage pregnancy that resulted in another statistical poverty riddled family. However, John says that the eternal logos of God was enfleshing himself in humanity. The second person of the Godhead was incarnating Himself as a baby that would forever rule and reign as the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords. He is the first and the last, the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. He is the great I AM and the Ancient of Days from the book of Daniel. He is not just a baby, He is the bread of life and the resurrection and the life, He is the third man in the fiery furnace, He is the one prophesied of in Isaiah and promised in Jeremiah. He is the THE LORD JESUS.

Paul is His ambassador to the greatest kingdom the world will ever know. Paul is His servant and though he be imprisoned, he stands free, fully justified before God whereas the others stand condemned. *The irony is thick and palpable.* There is a **collision** of worlds that has been recorded for all of history. Don't miss the drama being played out. Paul was in chains but only literally. His accusers and the judges themselves were the ones in real chains, shackled by their sin, destined for hell, incapable of saving themselves regardless of their wealth and power.

Agrippa and Festus represented Rome. They both died. Nero, even though he was a Caesar at the time, died. Rome itself died. It was conquered first by Christianity then by the barbarians. By the fourth century, Christianity was the dominant religion and in 380AD it became the official religion. Festus and Felix and Agrippa, and Bernice all died but Jesus is alive. Rome passed away and it's dominion ended. **Jesus and His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.** It has no end. It is for all eternity, now and forevermore.

## **II. Christian Worldview: Eternal Perspective**

There is more going on than meets the eye. **Appearances are not reality.** I wonder what cosmic thing God is doing in our lives today. Perhaps we are being poured out as drink offerings. Perhaps we are being squeezed and crushed.

Sometimes we miss the meaning behind our circumstances because we are so distracted by the pain or the outcome. our momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison... **2Cor 4:17** (see also Rom 8:18).

Paul wanted to go to Rome. I assume he wanted to do so voluntarily not to stand trial. However, this was a way for him to fulfill God's call for his life. Additionally, he had already written to them (most likely) some years earlier in 55-57AD expressing his desire to visit them. Now, he would go but under much different circumstances. Nevertheless, **God would remain faithful, and so would Paul.**

### **Conclusion:**

The crucifixion itself is an example of a physical event pregnant with theological, and spiritual significance that isn't necessarily obvious from the observers. When Jesus died on the cross, the Romans did not understand that they had killed the lord of glory. The Jews had a better idea but were not aware that God was accomplishing the salvation of many souls. It was not readily apparent that God was pouring out His wrath on His Son so that He would be a propitiation in His blood. There were signs, like the cry of dereliction and the darkness over the land. There were resurrections and the veil in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. However, to an outside observer, not made alive by the Spirit, these things were mere coincidences and were easily dismissed.

And yet, God was doing the most significant act in human history so much so that it actually split our telling of time.

### **Application:**

1. Remember that **circumstances are temporary**.
2. Don't give up: **persevere**. James 1:2-4; Romans 5:3-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7
3. Focus: strategically **ignoring** distractions. Hebrews 12:1-2  
Fix your gaze upon what matters most. Stop looking at alternatives. Stop considering the other side. Stop stopping. Get going. Stop looking back. Stop questioning if God loves you. Get on with the work of being faithful. Trust God and believe that is best.  
Remember what matters most. Strive to hear "well done good and faithful servant." Set your hand to the plow and don't look back.

The world is full of illusions, mirages, and deceptions. We don't get sidetracked or waylaid by it. Instead, we are faithful followers, all our days. For Christ, His covenant and kingdom. For a thousand years. Yes and amen. Let's pray.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Father, give us grace to walk with You in faithfulness regardless of our circumstances. Give us strength by Your Spirit to persevere and be faithful. Help us to focus on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. And now, as we take the Lord's supper, we trust that the Lord Jesus gave His life as a ransom for many and we get to experience Your grace in this meal. Let us commune with You as we take the elements. Thank you for the bread and the wine. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.