

## Crazy Christians

### 1. Paul's "Madness" - Ac 26:24

#### A. Setting:

1. Festus inherits the case of the Jews against Paul, fails to dispose of the case on its merits out of favoritism to the Jews (Ac 25:9).
2. Paul exercises right of appeal to Caesar.
3. Festus has no substantive charge and is incompetent to judge in matters concerning Jewish religion (25:18-20). Agrippa II consents to hear the case.

#### B. As Paul makes his defense to Agrippa, Festus interjects with accusations that Paul has lost his mind (Ac 26:24). What had Paul said to so provoke Festus?

1. He had made arguments from the OT Scriptures: the promise made to the fathers (26:6), the prophecies of the prophets and Moses (26:22). Festus charged, "Much learning ("many letters" or "many writings") is driving you mad!" (v 24). ***People who actually study the Bible and base their convictions upon its teachings are today thought to be fanatical, fundamentalists, "literalists" or otherwise imbalanced.***
2. He had spoken of personal changes in lifestyle, orientation and purpose: from zealous Jew/Christian-hater to preacher of gospel (26:4-5, 10-11, 22-23). ***People who radically undergo such a "religious" change are labeled brainwashed, cult-controlled or otherwise dispossessed of rational faculties.***
3. He also spoke of light and darkness, the power of Satan, forgiveness of sins and future inheritance, repentance and honorable living, and universal truth to both Jew and Gentile (26:18, 20, 23). He told of resurrections (26:8, 23) and said a heavenly vision by a resurrected Being commanded him to preach (26:16-18).

#### C. ***"For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me"*** (26:21), and for these reasons Festus accused him of insanity! Yet these were "*words of truth and reason*" (26:25). Similar reaction today:

1. When we preach that sexual activity outside of marriage is fornication and abstinence from such is the answer to avoiding AIDS, teen pregnancy, divorce, etc. *we are considered crazy.*
2. When we preach that divorce and remarriage is unlawful except on the basis of

sexual unfaithfulness *we are considered crazy*.

3. When we preach that women are disqualified from serving as elders and preachers, that husbands are the heads of their wives *we are considered crazy*. **How will we respond to such charges?**

## 2. “I Was Not Disobedient ...” - Ac 26:19

A. Tendencies when sustaining an “out of the mainstream” position:

1. Think God being too harsh, demanding; laws out of step with society. Leads to embarrassment, equivocation, apology for truth.
2. Doubt ourselves. Maybe *we* don’t see what everyone else sees?!
3. Subtly alter truth so as to make it less offensive, more palatable. Moderate our zeal, enthusiasm.

B. But the problem is not with **us**; it is not with the **truth**. God’s word is not unduly complex, obscure, illogical, outdated, ill-fitted, culturally biased, etc. Festus thought Paul was crazy because his own value/belief system was corrupt.

C. Paul “*was not disobedient to the heavenly vision*” (26:19). He did not apologize, hedge or feel sorry for himself. He boldly wished that all men could have what he had “*except for these chains*” (26:29). Brethren, ***if not you, who?!***

## 3. Almost Persuaded - Ac 26:28

A. Paul turns his attention to Agrippa: “*the king ... knows these things ...*” (26:26).  
Great grandfather - slaughtered the children in Bethlehem.  
Uncle - killed John, made sport of Jesus at His trial  
Father - killed the apostle James and intended to kill Peter. ***He knew!***

B. But Agrippa, with the Roman governor and the assembled dignitaries, and with his own sister as his incestuous consort, could not afford to acquiesce to these words of “truth and reason.” He was “almost persuaded” (Ac 26:28).

C. Paul’s freedom and work as an apostle was secondary to his desire to see Agrippa obey the gospel. *He preached the truth*.