

Devotional from Pastor Ho
January 27, 2021

Acts 26:6, *“And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers.”*

This is the apostle Paul speaking before King Agrippa and the new Roman governor Porcius Festus in a defense against the accusations of the Jews in Caesarea just before he was sent to Rome. The Jews who came down from Jerusalem to bring their “many and serious charges” against Paul could not prove them (25:7). Luke tells us that before the previous governor Felix, also in Caesarea, they accused Paul of stirring up riots among all the Jews throughout the world, of being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, and of trying to profane the temple (24:5-6).

After flatly denying their false accusations (24:12-13, 17-20), Paul cleverly affirmed, then as now, that it was because of his hope in the resurrection that he stood on trial (24:14-15, 21). Earlier in Jerusalem before the council which made up of the Sadducees and the Pharisees, he mentioned the resurrection of the dead to stir up division between the former who denied the resurrection and the latter who affirmed it (23:6-7). This time around, in our passage, instead of “the resurrection,” Paul has changed it to “the promise made by God to our fathers.” For Paul, then, the promise of the resurrection was made as early as the time Abraham was told to offer up Isaac, which the author of Hebrews echoes, “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, ...He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back” (Heb 11:17, 19).

Therefore, when the resurrected Jesus appeared before Paul on the road to Damascus (9:3-5), it was as if Paul found the last piece of the puzzle. The whole picture began to make sense to him. Because of this hope, which comes from knowing and gaining Christ, he now sees all things as rubbish (Phil 3:8). What was a mere trial before men, if he had endured worse things? Such was the hope that carried Paul along. What is the hope that carries you and me today? Is that hope powerful enough to carry us through the pandemic and every ordeal beyond that? Are we, like Paul, able to give thanks in all circumstances because of this hope?

Prayer: God of Abraham, our Lord, would you strengthen our faith, so that our hope and our love may grow? In Christ, our hope of glory. Amen.

何牧師的靈修

2021年1月27日

使徒行傳 26 章 6 節：“現在我站在這裡受審，是因為指望神向我們祖宗所應許的。”

這是使徒保羅在被遣送羅馬之前，在亞基帕王和新任羅馬巡撫非斯都面前，對在該撒利亞的猶太人的指責所作的辯護。從耶路撒冷下來的猶太人對保羅提出“許多重大的事”的指控，都是不能證實的 (25:7)。路加告訴我們，在前任巡撫腓力斯面前，也是在該撒利亞，他們告保羅是鼓動普天下眾猶太人生亂的，又是拿撒勒教黨裡的一個頭目，連聖殿他也想要污穢 (24:5-6)。

保羅斷然否認他們的錯誤指控後 (24:12-13,17-20)，就巧妙地肯定了，當時或現在，是因為他對復活的盼望，他才站在這裡受審 (24:14-15,21)。之前在耶路撒冷，在有撒都該人和法利賽人的公會面前，他提到死人復活，以激起否認復活的撒都該人和承認復活的法利賽人之間的分歧。這次，在我們的這段經文中，保羅將“復活”改為“神向我們祖宗所應許的”。所以對保羅來說，復活的承諾早在亞伯拉罕被吩咐獻上以撒的時候就已作出，希伯來書的作者也對此觀點表示贊同：亞伯拉罕因著信，被試驗的時候，就把以撒獻上；這便是那歡喜領受應許的，將自己獨生的兒子獻上…他以為神還能叫人從死裡復活；他也彷彿從死中得回他的兒子來 (希伯來書 11:17,19)。

因此，當復活的耶穌在大馬色路上出現在保羅面前時 (9:3-5)，保羅彷彿找到了拼圖的最後一片。整個畫面對他來說變得有意義了。因為這來自於認識和得著基督的盼望，他現在看萬事像糞土 (腓立比書 3:8)。如果他已經忍受了更糟的事情，那麼在人面前受審又算什麼？是這盼望帶動支持了保羅。今天是哪個盼望帶動你和我？那盼望是否有能力使我們度過疫情以及此後的每一個煎熬？我們是否像保羅一樣，由於這個盼望，能夠在任何情況下都獻上感恩？

禱告：亞伯拉罕的神，我們的主，求你加強我們的信心，讓我們的盼望和愛可以成長。奉基督，我們榮耀的盼望禱告。阿們。

何牧师的灵修

2021年1月27日

使徒行传 26 章 6 节：“现在我站在这里受审，是因为指望神向我们祖宗所应许的。”

这是使徒保罗在被遣送罗马之前，在亚基帕王和新任罗马巡抚非斯都面前，对在该撒利亚的犹太人的指责所作的辩护。从耶路撒冷下来的犹太人对保罗提出“许多重大的事”的指控，都是不能证实的 (25:7)。路加告诉我们，在前任巡抚腓力斯面前，也是在该撒利亚，他们告保罗是鼓动普天下众犹太人生乱的，又是拿撒勒教党里的一个头目，连圣殿他也想要污秽 (24:5-6)。

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因此，当复活的耶稣在大马色路上出现在保罗面前时 (9:3-5)，保罗仿佛找到了拼图的最后一片。整个画面对他来说变得有意义了。因为这来自于认识和得着基督的盼望，他现在看万事像粪土 (腓立比书 3:8)。如果他已经忍受了更糟的事情，那么在人面前受审又算什么？是这盼望带动支持了保罗。今天哪个盼望带动你和我？那盼望是否有能力使我们度过疫情以及此后的每一个煎熬？我们是否像保罗一样，由于这个盼望，能够在任何情况下都献上感恩？

祷告：亚伯拉罕的神，我们的主，求你加强我们的信心，让我们的盼望和爱可以成长。奉基督，我们荣耀的盼望祷告。阿们。