

## Chapter 14

### Paul Responds To The Elders

#### BIBLE

Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus, and said, “You men of Athens, I perceive that you are very religious in all things.<sup>1</sup> What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”<sup>2</sup>

“Open your hearts to us. We wronged no one. We corrupted no one. We took advantage of no one.<sup>3</sup> For you remember, brothers, our labor and travail; for working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached to you the Good News of God.”<sup>4</sup>

“We are therefore ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.<sup>5</sup> Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all wrongs.”<sup>6</sup>

They listened to him until he said that; then they lifted up their voice, and said, “Rid the earth of this fellow, for he isn't fit to live!”<sup>7</sup>

#### COMMENTARY

<sup>1</sup> **Acts 17:22** Paul, compared to John, tends to be more sensible, agreeable, optimistic, and light hearted. He is sensitive to the emotional needs of other people, but unlike John has a tendency to repress his own feelings.

<sup>2</sup> **Romans 8:31** Paul: “I am the eternal optimist. No matter how rough it gets, there's always light somewhere. The rest of the sky may be cloudy, but that little bit of blue draws me on.”

<sup>3</sup> **2 Corinthians 7:2** Paul: “I do have a belief in goodness, a good spirit. I think what people have done with religion is personified good and evil, so good's become God with ‘o’ out, and evil's become Devil with a ‘d’ added. That's my theory of religion.”

<sup>4</sup> **1 Thessalonians 2:9** In “A Hard Days Night,” the Beatles have been “working like a dog.”

<sup>5</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:20** To do something “on behalf of Christ” means to do it in love, in the awareness of the Christ spirit.

<sup>6</sup> **Proverbs 10:12** In “Here, There and Everywhere,” Paul reminds us that “love is to share” and that “love never dies.”

<sup>7</sup> **Acts 22:22**

Likewise the chief priests also mocking, with the scribes, the Pharisees, and the elders, said<sup>8</sup> “Doesn't even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?”<sup>9</sup>

But Paul said, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city. I beg you, allow me to speak to the people.”<sup>10</sup> We are of God. He who knows God listens to us. He who is not of God doesn't listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.”<sup>11</sup>

All who sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face like it was the face of an angel.<sup>12</sup> However they did not listen, but they did what they did before.<sup>13</sup>

They asked him, “Tell us: by what authority do you do these things? Or who is giving you this authority?”<sup>14</sup> He asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, “His name is John.” They all marveled.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>8</sup> **Matthew 27:41**

<sup>9</sup> **1 Corinthians 11:14**

<sup>10</sup> **Acts 21:39** Timothy Leary once described the mission of Paul and the Beatles like this: “Put yourself, if you will, in God's place. Christ! What a mess down there. Time for another avatar. Another Divine intervention to loosen things up and restore the beauty and laughter and harmony of the natural order. You gotta come back down and cool off the feverish planet.”

<sup>11</sup> **1 John 4:6** Leary: “I declare that the Beatles are mutants. Prototypes of evolutionary agents sent by God, endowed with a mysterious power to create a new human species, a young race of laughing freemen... Joyful young messiahs who dispel our fears and charm us back into the pagan dance of harmony... Holy minstrels. Electronic instruments of the divine current... Wise, slick Divinity agents who come along exactly when we need to be reminded about what's happening.”

<sup>12</sup> **Acts 6:15**

<sup>13</sup> **2 Kings 17:40**

<sup>14</sup> **Luke 20:2**

<sup>15</sup> **Luke 1:63** John, the founder and original leader of the group, was the one individual in the band that all of the other members looked up to.