

# Acts 26:1-32

## Paul Before Agrippa

Jeremy Doan

Holly Hills Bible Church

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## Here comes the king

- Paul had been held by Felix for two years – 24:22-27
  - Felix is replaced by Festus as Governor
- Festus hears Paul's defense – 25:1-12
  - Festus offers to send Paul to Jerusalem
    - The Jews want to kill Paul along the way
  - Paul appeals to Caesar
- Agrippa arrives in Caesarea – 25:13-27
  - Festus explains the situation to Agrippa
  - Agrippa wants to hear for himself
  - Festus presents Agrippa to the tribunal

# I consider myself fortunate

*1 Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and proceeded to make his defense:*

- This isn't a trial, and Paul is not giving a defense here
  - He uses this opportunity to declare the Gospel
- Paul appeals to Agrippa's Jewishness
  - *"You are an expert in all customs and questions among the Jews"*
  - Principle: know your audience
- Paul appeals to his Jewishness
  - *"From the beginning [my life] was spent among my own nation and at Jerusalem"*
  - *"I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion"*

## Hope in the promises

6 *“And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers;*

- What is the hope to which Paul refers?
  - *“And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews”*
- The message of the apostles is consistent throughout Acts
  - Jesus is the Messiah, who must suffer
    - See 2:36, 3:26, 4:11-12, 5:31, 7:52, 13:38-39, 22:14-15
  - God has resurrected him, in accordance with the Scriptures
    - See 2:30-32, 3:14-15, 4:10, 5:30, 13:34-35\*
  - *“Why is it considered incredible among you people if God does raise the dead?”*
- *22 I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place*

## A light from heaven

12 *“While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests”*

- Paul was engaged in opposing the name of Jesus and persecuting his followers
- Paul recounts his conversion experience again
  - Similar to 22:1-21
  - He<sup>1</sup> appears to be consolidating the story
    - Here he indicates God told him his “mission” right there on the road
    - God had told him this through Ananias – see 9:15-16 & 22:14-15
  - More details about his mission/purpose
    - *To appoint you as servant and witness*
    - *Delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles*
    - *To open their eyes*

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<sup>1</sup>or Luke

# I was not disobedient

12 *“So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision”*

- Paul notes that he is simply following orders<sup>2</sup>
  - Or walking by faith
  - *having obtained help from God, I stand*
- Note the order in which he describes he journey
  - *but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles*
- What is Paul preaching?
  - *They should repent and turn to God*
  - *Performing deeds appropriate to repentance*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Is the double negative Luke's or Paul's?

<sup>3</sup>Faith without works is dead?

## In a short time

*24 While Paul was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad."*

- Festus thinks Paul has gone mad
  - Evidence of 1 Corinthians?
- Paul addresses Agrippa directly
  - *for this has not been done in a corner*
    - The events to which Paul alludes were public
  - *"King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do."*
  - His desire is that all become believers
- Is King Agrippa under conviction here?
  - *"In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian?"*
- Final assessment
  - Agrippa acknowledges that Paul should be freed
  - The mechanism of the appeal to Caesar is already moving

# Mad (in the) World

- Using the systems of the world to proclaim the Gospel
- Speaking with boldness, having confidence in the promises of God
- Speaking directly to people, establishing a rapport with them
- Knowing ultimately conviction is a work of the Holy Spirit
  - and people have to choose to listen to us
- Loving our neighbors, understanding what is the best for them