

Paul Preaches to King Agrippa Acts 25:13 - 26:32

Introduction

Once Paul appealed his case to Caesar, he was probably eager to be on his way. The Lord had promised him, "*Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome*" (Acts 23:11). However, it took some time before he could be sent away. Festus had to make arrangements for his prisoner to travel. He also had to prepare paperwork to be given to Caesar explaining why Paul was a prisoner. Even the time Paul spent waiting in the Caesara prison was part of God's plan. Paul would have another chance to preach the gospel. This time he would preach to a king and fulfill another promise made to him by the Lord (Acts 9:15, that he would bear Christ's name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel).

Outline of Acts 25:13 - 26:32

- I. Agrippa Visits Caesarea-Acts 25:13-27
- II. Agrippa Hears Paul's Message-Acts 26:1-23
- III. Agrippa and Festus Respond-Acts 26:24-32

I. Agrippa Visits Caesarea - Acts 25:13-27

King Agrippa (son of Herod Agrippa I of Acts 12) ruled the nearby areas of Palestine, so he made a neighborly visit to greet the new governor of Caesarea. He brought his sister, Bernice, with him and called her his queen.

Festus thought that the King might help him come up with a charge against Paul. Festus probably knew that he would look foolish if he sent Paul to Rome without **valid** charges. It would also make him look like he could not handle his new job. Agrippa was the perfect person to ask for help because he had more power than Festus. Also, he was a practicing Jew and had some control over Jewish affairs. The Roman government had given Agrippa the responsibility to appoint the Jewish high priest, among other duties. He was familiar

with the Jewish religion and would understand the details of the case better than Festus, who was a Gentile.

Festus explained that the previous governor, Felix, had left Paul in prison. When visiting Jerusalem, the Jewish chief priests and elders had told him about the prisoner and asked for a sentence. They returned to Caesarea and, the very next day, Festus took the judgement seat to hear Paul's defense in front of his accusers.

Festus had expected the accusers to show proof of Paul's crimes. He was surprised to find that the charges were not criminal at all. The Jews only had disagreements about their religion, including the death and resurrection of Jesus. Festus did not know much about the Jewish religion and was not sure what to do. He had suggested that Paul go to Jerusalem for judgment. This was a cowardly act because he knew that Paul was not guilty of anything deserving death (25:25). He had the authority to release Paul justly, but he feared upsetting the Jews. Paul had appealed to *Augustus*.¹

Agrippa had probably heard about Paul and told Festus that he *would like to hear the man* himself. Festus made arrangements for this to take place the very next day. The introduction took place *with great **pomp***. Agrippa and Bernice made their entrance into the auditorium. There were also Roman commanders and **prominent** citizens there. Then, the lowly prisoner, Paul, was brought in. Festus introduced Paul to the Gentile crowd as the man whom the Jews proclaimed *not fit to live any longer*. He admitted that he found nothing that deserved death in what Paul

1 "Augustus" means "the revered" or "august one." It had been the name of the first Roman emperor, but was now applied to all Roman emperors.

had done. When Paul appealed to Caesar, Festus had agreed. He hoped to figure out what charges could be made against Paul so that the prisoner could be sent to the emperor.

II. Agrippa Hears Paul's Message - Acts 26:1-23

Agrippa gave Paul permission to speak and Paul gladly began his defense. He spoke mainly to Agrippa because he knew the king was Jewish, an expert in Jewish customs, and interested in Jewish **theology**. Paul defended the gospel as well as the way that he lived his life. He explained that he lived for the hope of all orthodox Jews: that the Messiah would come and that the dead would be resurrected. (The Saducees were an exception.) Paul added that he believed the Messiah was Jesus. He had come and He had risen, proving the resurrection of the dead and keeping God's promises to Israel. It was amazing to Paul that his fellow Jews (who shared the same hope) could not accept the fulfillment of the long-awaited promise. Instead, they turned and accused him.

When Paul asked, *Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead*, he was probably speaking to the entire audience. Being a Jew, Agrippa must have believed that God could raise the dead, but the main audience of Gentiles would not have believed this claim. Of course, the reason the Jews attacked Paul's teaching and wanted to destroy him was because he preached that God had raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

Paul confessed that at first he had shared the same blindness of heart as the Jews. He had persecuted people who believed in Jesus' resurrection. All the Jews in Jerusalem knew about him and his actions. They knew that he would even follow the Christians to foreign cities to persecute them.

For the third time in Acts, Paul tells the story of his conversion on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19, Acts 22:1-21). Paul was filled

with zeal to persecute the believers and had received permission from the chief priests to search for the Christians in Damascus and bring them back as prisoners to Jerusalem. Around noon, Paul saw *a light from heaven, brighter than the sun*, shining all around himself and those who were with him. The whole traveling party fell to the ground. As he lay there, Paul heard a voice speaking to him in Hebrew. The voice called Paul by his Hebrew name, *Saul*, and asked why he was persecuting Him. The voice said that it was hard for Paul to *kick against the goads*. A "goad" was a tool used to push farm animals. Perhaps God was referring to Paul struggling against his conscience or against his **destiny**.

Paul's reply to the voice was, *who are You, Lord?* He recognized that the voice came from a heavenly being, but he did not know who it was. The Lord answered Paul, *I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting*. Jesus told Paul to *rise and stand on your feet*. He told him that his ministry was to be a witness for Himself to both Jews and Gentiles. Jesus' promise to deliver Paul from the Jews and Gentiles shows that he would be persecuted by both groups of people. Jesus also explained the purpose of Paul's ministry to the Jews and the Gentiles:

1. *To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, from the power of darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.*
2. *That they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.*

Paul humbly told King Agrippa that he had obeyed the command he received in the vision. He had gone to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles. He had called both to turn to God and repent. Paul explained that the Jews had taken him in the Jerusalem temple and tried to kill him because of his message of salvation which God helped him to share. This message is for you too! Who did God send to share it with you? Who do you know that needs to hear this message of salvation?

III. Agrippa and Festus Respond - Acts 26:24-32

As Paul finished his defense, Festus was the first to respond. He said that Paul was crazy from studying too much. Being a Greek, he did not believe the resurrection was possible. But, Paul calmly responded that his words were of *sober truth* (NASB). He pointed out that the things which he spoke about had not been *done in a corner*. The gift of salvation was not a secret. Jesus Christ had appeared openly and publicly. King Agrippa had probably heard of Jesus' ministry.

Paul turned to the king and asked him a direct question. *King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.* In other words, Paul was asking Agrippa if he believed in the resurrection of the dead as proclaimed by the prophets. This put Agrippa in an uncomfortable spot. He did not want Festus to think he was silly for believing. He also did not want to endanger his relationship with the Jews. His answer was most likely meant to be a joking response, *you almost persuade me to become a Christian*. Unfortunately, you cannot be 'almost' saved. That is like saying, 'I was almost saved from a fire.'

Paul took Agrippa's answer very seriously. Salvation was not a joking matter to him. His heart's desire was that every single person in that auditorium would become *altogether* a Christian just as he was, but without the prisoner chains.

The Pharisees (Acts 23:9), Claudius Lysias (Acts 23:29), and Festus (Acts 25:25) had all declared Paul to be innocent, and now Agrippa agreed: Paul had not violated any law and did not deserve death or imprisonment. In fact, Agrippa declared that he deserved to be set free. However, Paul had appealed to Caesar and the legal process had to be followed. Paul would be sent to Caesar. †

Prayer

The message of salvation is precious and not a joke. Who do you know that needs to hear this message? Pray for God to give you strength and opportunity to share. If you cannot think of anyone to share the message with, pray that God will bring someone into your life that you can share it with.

Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 1:21 *For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.*

Vocabulary

valid - justifiable, legally correct, relevant, meaningful

pomp - a show of magnificence

prominent - widely and popularly known

theology - the study of God, the study of religion and its practice

destiny - something to which a person is set apart for specifically

Questions for Acts Lesson 21

All questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

DAY ONE: Review last weeks lesson and notes.

1. What do you think is important to remember about King Agrippa?

2. In what way(s) are you like Paul in your thoughts and desires?

DAY TWO: Read Acts 27:1-8.

3. a. In verse 1, what decision was made concerning Paul?

b. Who was put in charge of Paul?

c. How did he treat Paul?

4. a. On a map, trace Paul's journey from Cesarea to Fair Havens.

- b. Write down one thing that stood out to you about this journey.

5. ? (Thought Question) How many times do you find the pronoun "we" in this passage?_____ What do you learn from this?

DAY THREE: Read Acts 27:9-21.

6. a. Why was sailing from Fair Havens dangerous at this time? Give verse.

vs. _____

- b. The *Fast* refers to the Day of Atonement which took place on the 10th day of the 7th month of the Jewish calendar. This was in the fall of the year. From the Acts passage and from what you know about the weather, why was sailing dangerous at this time?

7. a. What advice did Paul give?

b. Whose advice was followed? Why?

8. Underline the reasons that the men on the ship gave up hope.

The ship was caught in a headwind.

The storm was tossing the ship around.

Everyone was seasick.

They didn't see the sun or stars for many days.

Paul forgot to pray.

DAY FOUR: Read Acts 27:21-38.

9. Who did not give up hope? Why not?

10. a. What did Paul say they would have to do? Circle the correct answers.

run aground on an island

pray hard for 7 days

eat some food

keep everyone on the ship

build life rafts

b. What did Paul promise in verse 34?

11. a. What encouraged everyone on the ship?

b. How many people were encouraged?

DAY FIVE: Read Acts 27:39-44.

12. What happened next? Circle T (true) or F (false) next to each statement.

a. (T or F) They saw a bay with a beach.

b. (T or F) They danced for joy.

c. (T or F) They cut the anchors and left them in the sea.

d. (T or F) They hoisted the mainsail and made for shore.

e. (T or F) They threw all the prisoners, except Paul, to the sharks.

13 a. What was the soldiers' plan? What was their reasoning behind it?

b. Who overruled the plan? Why?

14. a. Who left the ship first?

b. What did everyone else do?

c. How many made it safely to land?

15. ♥(Heart Question) Imagine you were one of the soldiers or sailors on the ship. What would you think of Paul and his God once you were safely on the shore? Give reasons for your answer.

VOCABULARY FOR ACTS LESSON 20

***"The more words you know, the more clearly and powerfully you will think...
and the more ideas you will invite into your mind."***
— Wilfred Funk

DAY ONE: Write the definition of the vocabulary word.

valid - _____

pomp - _____

prominent - _____

theology - _____

destiny - _____

DAY TWO: Write three sentences using three different vocabulary words from THIS lesson.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

DAY THREE: Circle the word's synonym(s). (Synonym is a word/phrase that means the same thing.)

valid -right unreal genuine

pomp - grandeur magnificence plainness

prominent inconspicuous noticeable flashy

DAY FOUR: Match the word to its meaning.

destiny	a show of magnificence
prominent	justifiable, legally correct, relevant, meaningful
theology	widely and popularly known
pomp	the study of God, the study of religion and its practice
valid	something to which a person is set apart for specifically

DAY FIVE: Review previous vocabulary word(s).**Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the Word Bank.**

reputation - commonly held _____ about a person's _____

fanatical - with extreme, unreasonable _____

humility - the act of being _____ in behavior, attitude, or _____

advent - the coming of _____ starting with his _____

divine - coming _____ from God or a god

prediction - something told _____ it happens; _____

WORD-BANK

character
opinion
Christ

spirit
enthusiasm
before
birth

modest
fortold
directly

ANSWER KEY

reputation - commonly held opinion about a person's character

fanatical - with extreme, unreasonable enthusiasm

humility - the act of being modest in behavior, attitude, or spirit.

advent - the coming of Christ starting with his birth

divine - coming directly from God or a god

prediction - something told before it happens; foretold

insulted - to treat with rudeness, offend, or hurt.