

Acts 26 Paul's Defense before Agrippa

Now Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." Then Paul extended his hand and proceeded to make his defense: 2 "Regarding all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate that I am about to make my defense before you today, 3 especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among the Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

4 "So then, all Jews know my way of life since my youth, which from the beginning was spent among my own nation and in Jerusalem, 5 since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion. 6 And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers;

7 the promise to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve God night and day. For this hope, O king, I am being accused by Jews. 8 Why is it considered incredible among you people if God raises the dead? 9 "So I thought to myself that I had to act in strong opposition to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, after receiving authority from the chief priests, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being put to death.

11 And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was extremely enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities. 12 "While so engaged, as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, 13 at midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who were journeying with me. 14 And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

15 And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you as a servant and a witness not only to the things in which you have seen Me, but also to the things in which I will appear to you, 17 rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

19 "For that reason, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but continually proclaimed to those in Damascus first, and in Jerusalem, and then all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they are to repent and turn to God, performing deeds consistent with repentance. 21 For these reasons some Jews seized me in the temple and tried to murder me

22 So, having obtained help from God, 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, 23 as to whether the Christ was to suffer, and whether, as first from the resurrection of the dead, He would proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."

24 While Paul was stating these things in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you insane."

25 But Paul *said, "I am not insane, most excellent Festus; on the contrary, I am speaking

out with truthful and rational words. 26 For the king knows about these matters, and I also speak to him with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you believe.” 28 Agrippa replied to Paul, “In a short time you are going to persuade me to make a Christian of myself.”

29 And Paul said, “I would wish to God that even in a short or long time not only you, but also all who hear me this day would become such as I myself am, except for these chains.” 30 The king stood up and the governor and Bernice, and those who were sitting with them, 31 and when they had gone out, they began talking to one another, saying, “This man is not doing anything deserving death or imprisonment.” 32 And Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

- What questions were provoked within you?
- Did anything confuse you?
- Did anything move you emotionally?
- Did God instruct you to do something?
- Did you gain any insight into God’s character?

Paul’s helpful insights

1. Paul addresses Agrippa by name, when you do that what happens?
2. Why do we put our hands up to stop the person speaking over us?
3. Paul declares he was happy that it was King Agrippa who was going to hear the case
4. But was he really buttering him up?
5. Paul tells his story that justifies the journey he has been on.
6. Paul as a Pharisee would have been legalistic in his approach to life.
7. Someone who knew the law and the teaching of the prophets.
8. Paul asked the question ‘why do you find it hard to believe God can raise the dead?’
9. Paul says, ‘on hearing what Christians were doing to the Jewish community, he became hostile to the sect
10. The sect called The Way and set about bringing their destruction’.
11. He continues, ‘ I was even involved in the stoning of Stephen, taking care of belongings while they did it’.
12. He says ‘I pro-actively hounded them down and on one such mission I had a God encounter’.
13. Paul used this story, his testimony, many times.
14. Why did the people fall to the ground when Paul had this God encounter?
15. Why do people fall to the ground when the Holy Spirit comes upon them?
16. What is it to ‘kick against the goad’?
17. Why did Paul say to God ‘who are you Lord’?
18. Jesus’s call on Paul was to tell him to get up and go and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.
19. What is it to have your eyes opened from darkness to light?
20. What and how was Paul going to do to make this happen?
21. Who is under the dominion of satan and who is under the dominion of God?
22. The journey of salvation is to be saved by the gospel of Jesus Christ
23. And sanctified by the gospel of Jesus Christ.
24. What is it to be sanctified by faith in Jesus?
25. What is it to perform deeds of repentance?

26. He tells King Agrippa that he had no choice than to obey God.
27. He invites King Agrippa to turn to God and live right.
28. He declares 'some Jews wanted to stop me in my mission in obeying God'.
29. He says 'all I am doing is saying what Moses and the prophets have said before in the scriptures'.
30. It was they who told us of the Christ and all that He would do when He came,
31. Including the resurrection of the dead.
32. Jesus came to proclaim light both to the Jew and to the Gentile.
33. Festus frustration reaction to Paul, with an outburst and an insult,
34. Because Paul said something Festus didn't like!
35. Paul says 'I am not mad, but I tell you a sober truth'. What is a sober truth?
36. Paul says 'I know that King Agrippa knows, that what I am saying about Moses and the prophets, is true'.
37. Paul invites Agrippa to consider the gospel of Jesus himself.
38. Agrippa defends himself with the words 'would you try to convert me?'
39. Paul replies 'absolutely! And not only you but all who are hearing this gospel today'.
40. King Agrippa adjourns and says 'there is no charge
41. But he has requested a hearing with Caesar – to Caesar he must go'..