

Acts 25:13--26:32 **King Agrippa hears Paul**

Agrippa greets Festus the new Governor of Judea

¹³ And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus. ¹⁴ When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying:

Festus tells Agrippa about Paul

"There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix, ¹⁵ about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him. ¹⁶ To them I answered, 'It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.'

¹⁷ "Therefore when they had come together, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in. ¹⁸ When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed, ¹⁹ but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

²⁰ And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters. ²¹ But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar."

Agrippa asked to hear Paul

²² Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I also would like to hear the man myself." "Tomorrow," he said, "you shall hear him."

Entry with Great Pomp – Paul brought in

²³ So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in.

Introduction by Festus – Judged innocent by Festus – Seeks advice regarding letter to Caesar

²⁴ And Festus said: "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer. ²⁵ But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him.

²⁶ I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write. ²⁷ For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him." NKJV

Acts 26:1-32

Permission to speak

¹ Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself."

Paul's message for king Agrippa and those present

Respectful introduction

So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: ² I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, ³ especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.

Personal history as a Pharisee

⁴ My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. ⁵ They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. ⁶ And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. ⁷ To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews.

Zeal in persecuting the Church

⁸ Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead? ⁹ Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

Encounter on road to Damascus

¹² "While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, ¹³ at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. ¹⁴ And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

¹⁵ "So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶ But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. ¹⁷ I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, ¹⁸ to open their eyes, in order to turn them 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 are sanctified by faith in Me.'

Obedience to vision – Message to all

¹⁹ "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰ but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.

Reason for Jews desire to kill Paul

²¹ For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. ²² Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come-- ²³ that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."

Outburst from Festus

24 Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"

Paul's respectful response

25 But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. 26 For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."

Almost Persuaded

28 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

Paul's heart's desire – Salvation for everyone

29 And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains."

He is innocent and might have been set free except for his appeal to Caesar

30 When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; 31 and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains." 32 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar." NKJV

Facts Revealed:

Agrippa greets Festus the new Governor of Judea

- ✚ King Agrippa was the last of the Herodian line of rulers who came with his sister Bernice to greet Festus the new Governor of Judea. [Acts 25:13]
- ✚ Herodian line was descended from an Idumaeen named Antipater the father of Herod the Great.
 - ✚ The Idumaeans were descendants from Esau, who were conquered and brought to Judaism by John Hyrcanus, 130 B.C., thus King Agrippa was familiar with the Jewish religion and also with the Christian movement.
- ✚ Julius Caesar had made Herod the Great, Procurator of Judea in 47 B.C.
- ✚ Agrippa was king over Chalcis and the Tetrarchies formerly held by Philip and Lysanias as appointed by Claudius, and given the title of "King." Nero later gave him additional cities in Galilee and Persea.
- ✚ King Agrippa came with his sister Bernice to congratulate Festus for his recent appointment as Governor of Judea. [Acts 25:13]

Festus tells Agrippa about Paul

- ✚ After the formalities were over and king Agrippa had been with Festus a number of days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king. [Acts 25:14-21]
- ✚ Felix left Paul as a prisoner for Festus to deal with.
- ✚ The Chief Priests and Elders of the Jews requested the death penalty for Paul.
- ✚ Since Paul was a Roman, Felix could not deliver him to the Jews to kill before he had a chance to face his accusers and be allowed to answer for himself.
- ✚ The charges of the Jews did not have any bearing on Roman law, but only about their own religion and Jesus whom the Jews said was dead, but Paul affirmed was alive.

- ✧ Felix, being uncertain about Jewish religion asked if Paul was willing to go to Jerusalem where the Jews were waiting to ambush him, but **Paul appealed to Augustus Caesar** .
 - ✧ Augustus Caesar (**Nero** Claudius Drusus Germanicus) was the Roman Emperor at that time (54-68 A.D.).
 - ✧ The honorary title, "**Augustus Caesar**," was given to all the Roman emperors from the time of Julius Caesar beginning with **Caius Octavius (Octavian) Caepias** the grand-nephew of Julius Caesar who first acquired for himself the title "**Augustus Caesar**" and ruled as emperor from 27 B.C. to 14 A.D.
 - ✧ **Augustus** means (consecrated, holy, sacred)
 - ✧ **Augustus Caesar** at the time of this meeting, was the title given to **Nero** emperor of Rome.

Agrippa asked to hear Paul

- ✧ Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I also would like to hear the man myself." "Tomorrow," he (Festus) said, "you shall hear him." [Acts 25:22]

Entry with Great Pomp – Paul brought in

- ✧ So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in. [Acts 25:23]

Introduction by Festus – Judged innocent by Festus – Seeks advice regarding letter to Caesar

- ✧ Festus introduced Paul to King Agrippa and those assembled in the auditorium. [Acts 25:24-27]
 - ✧ The petition from the Jews claims Paul is not fit to live any longer.
 - ✧ Festus could find nothing deserving of death in Paul.
 - ✧ Paul had appealed to Caesar and Festus was seeking to comply, but wanted advice as to what charge should accompany the prisoner.
 - ✧ It seems unreasonable to send Paul to Caesar without specifying a charge against him.

Permission to speak

- ✧ Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." [Acts 26:1]

Paul's message for king Agrippa and those present

Respectful introduction

- ✧ So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself:
I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently. [Acts 26:1-3]

Personal history as a Pharisee

- ✧ Paul expresses his life to the present. [Acts 26:4-7]
 - ✧ The Jews know Paul's life from his youth in Jerusalem if they were willing to testify.
 - ✧ Paul lived according to the strictest sect of their religion, a Pharisee.
 - ✧ Paul is being tried for the hope of all Jews, in the promise made by God to their fathers.
 - ✧ It is the same hope that the twelve tribes of Israel serve God night and day to attain.
 - ✧ For the sake of that hope, Paul now stands accused by the Jews.

Zeal in persecuting the Church

- ✧ Paul's history serving the High Priests and Council. [Acts 26:8-11]
 - ✧ Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?
 - ✧ Paul did many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth.
 - ✧ By authority of the Chief Priests, Paul shut many of the Saints up in prison in Jerusalem, and called for their death when he cast his vote.
 - ✧ Persecuted them in every synagogue, compelling them to blaspheme.

✧ Persecuted them to foreign cities.

Encounter on road to Damascus

✧ With authority from the Chief Priests, Paul journeyed toward Damascus of Syria. [Acts 9:1-2, 26:12]

✧ Paul met the risen Jesus at noon on the road to Damascus. [Acts 9:3-5, 26:12-15]

✧ At noon, a light brighter than the sun.

✧ All the company fallen to the ground.

✧ Voice of Jesus speaking in the Hebrew language, saying "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

✧ Saul asked the identity of the Voice.

✧ The Voice identified Himself as Jesus whom you are persecuting.

✧ Purpose of the appearance of Jesus: [Acts 26:16-18]

✧ To make Paul a witness and minister of the things he has seen and things yet to be revealed to him.

✧ Jesus promised to deliver Paul from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles to whom he would be sent.

✧ Paul is sent to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. That they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus.

Obedience to vision – Message to all

✧ Paul obeyed the Heavenly Vision: [Acts 26:19-20]

✧ In obedience to the Heavenly Vision, Paul had declared that people should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance, to those in Damascus, in Jerusalem, throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles.

Reason for Jews desire to kill Paul

✧ For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me: [Acts 26:21-23]

✧ Having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come—

✧ The Christ would suffer.

✧ Jesus would be the first to rise from the dead.

✧ Jesus would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.

Outburst from Festus

✧ Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!" [Acts 26:24]

Paul's respectful response – Question to Agrippa

✧ But Paul said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. [Acts 26:25-26]

✧ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe." [Acts 26:27]

Almost Persuaded

✧ Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian." [Acts 26:28]

Paul's heart's desire – Salvation for everyone

✧ And Paul said, "**I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains.**" [Acts 26:29]

He is innocent and might have been set free except for his appeal to Caesar

- ✚ When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "**This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains.**" [\[Acts 26:30-31\]](#)
- ✚ Then Agrippa said to Festus, "**This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.**" [\[Acts 26:32\]](#)