

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 11TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

A FAITHFUL JEW (ACTS 26:1–11) RESPECTFUL RESPONSES

Paul works hard to make sure that lost people don't seem like his enemies. He is respectful towards Agrippa and all who are listening. Agrippa's knowledge of the Jewish customs and controversies helps Paul know what tack to take in his defense.

- **When we have opportunities to speak to people far from God, be respectful. BEFORE CHRIST**

Paul starts his defense with his own personal story before he met Jesus on the Damascus road. He was a good Jew, who was so good that he chose to live the strictest path of Jewish faith as a Pharisee.

- **Paul wasn't glorifying his former life but stating what Jesus had saved him from. We glorify Jesus, not our sin.**

WHAT'S THIS TRIAL ABOUT?

Paul wasn't on trial about his past, nor about his belief in a resurrection, **but about his belief in the resurrection of Jesus, who is the Messiah promised to the Jews.** Many were skeptical of this claim, as Paul once was.

- **For centuries, people have tried to convincingly disprove the resurrection of Jesus. All have failed.**

PAUL UNDERSTOOD THEIR SKEPTICISM

As Saul, Paul hated everything to do with the name of Jesus and those who followed Him. He pursued them, imprisoned them, approved of their murders, and even worked to capture them in blasphemy against God by saying Jesus was God's Son.

- **Paul's murderous past was a prelude to Jesus' demonstration of His power to save.**

PAUL'S CONVERSION (ACTS 26:12–23) THE ENCOUNTER THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

Paul hated the followers of Jesus. The chief priests and Sanhedrin gave him the authority to act on that hatred. But on his way to Damascus, "a light from heaven brighter than the sun" knocked Paul to the ground.

- **Jesus meets us where we most need Him. For some, it may be a still small voice. For others, it may be fire from Heaven.**

JESUS HAD BEEN PURSUING PAUL

Paul's persecution of Christ's body, His Believers, was a persecution of Jesus. But Jesus had a plan and purpose for Paul. From Stephen's sermon and martyrdom, Jesus had been working on Paul's heart. Jesus had been using a heart "goad" (a sharp stick used to prod a sluggish ox) to ready Paul for this moment.

- **Jesus seeks and saves the lost.**

THE COMMISSION

Once Paul sees Jesus for who He really is, he's now ready to follow Him. Paul will have the privilege of preaching the good news to those in darkness and the power of Satan so that they may be forgiven of sins and made holy through Jesus.

- **This is the commission every Christian has received to the glory of God.**

OBEDIENT TO THE COMMISSION

Since the Damascus road, Paul has lived in obedience to all Jesus called him to be and do. That's why the Jews want him dead. Paul's understanding of what the Scriptures (OT) taught is so clear and right that the Jews can't reason with him, so they want to eliminate him.

- **Obedience brings a "well done" from Jesus but maybe suffering as well.**

LIGHT INTO THE DARKNESS

Paul obediently preached Jesus as the suffering Messiah promised in the Scriptures, who rose from the dead to bring light to both the Jews and Gentiles. He called on them to repent of their sins, trust in Jesus' work for them, and live out their faith through good works. This is the good news that pierces the darkness with hope.

- 2 Corinthians 4:3–6

RESPONSES (ACTS 26:24–32) MADNESS?

At the mention of the resurrection, Festus declares that all of Paul's learning has made him mad. Paul calmly replies that Christianity isn't based on insane proclamations of crazy people but on the truth and facts of an empty tomb.

- In 1 Corinthians 1:18, Paul says the cross (the gospel) is foolishness to the perishing. **For Believers, nothing is surer.**

AGRIPPA KNEW THE STORY

Paul appealed to King Agrippa's knowledge of all that had occurred with Jesus, His death and resurrection, and the growth of the Church. Once again, knowledge didn't bring conversion. Agrippa knew the story, but he didn't place his faith in the story.

- **Paul wasn't on trial anymore—Agrippa was. And he diverted attention back to Paul.**

PAUL'S HEART

Whether a quick conversion or through many discussions, Paul didn't care how hard or how long it took for someone to trust in Jesus, just that they did.

- **The reality of this story is that though Paul was in chains, he was truly free. And though seemingly free, Agrippa, Bernice, Festus, and the others were in chains.**

GOD'S PLANS VS. MAN'S PLANS

Jesus had promised Paul that he would testify about Him in Rome (23:11). Though accused by the Jews and imprisoned by the Romans, Paul had done nothing wrong and could have been released had he not appealed to Caesar. God's plans for Paul were going to be accomplished for His glory.

- **We can trust God's plans for us.**

GOD HAS GIVEN ALL OF US A STORY

- If we've come to faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we have a story to tell others. It's a story that glorifies Jesus. It's our story to tell. **Tell it boldly and joyfully!**
- If we're in Jesus, we are new creatures in Him. Our old lives are covered by His blood, and He has made us new.
- **Our old lives are preludes to His power to save.**

LIGHT INTO DARKNESS

- Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12). We are to shine that light in the world (Matthew 5:14–16). We do this for the good of the world.
- Whether in freedom or bondage, we have a commission from Jesus to preach the gospel. **How else will our family, friends, and others come to faith in Jesus?**

DISCIPLES ARE EVANGELISTS

- The more we know Jesus, and the more we love people, the more we should proclaim Him.
- We can't predict or control people's responses. So don't worry about how they might respond. Be obedient to Jesus, **and trust that He has a plan to use you for His glory to set people free.**