

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 11TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

PAST (ACTS 26:1-11) "PERMISSION TO SPEAK"

Given the opportunity to give his defense, Paul quieted the crowd and spoke directly to King Agrippa.

- Paul was honestly thankful to get to speak to Agrippa, who would understand the language of a faithful Jewish man.
- While Paul addressed the king, everyone else was bound not to interrupt as the king listened patiently to Paul's extended speech.

"ALL THE JEWS KNOW"

Paul started his defense by saying that everyone who was accusing him knew the story of his life.

- From his hometown to Jerusalem, he was committed to studying and living according to Jewish law.
- He even rose through the ranks of the Pharisees and may have even been in the Sanhedrin.
- He was a strong, faithful, obedient Jew.

BECAUSE OF THIS HOPE

Paul declared that he was on trial because of his hope in what God had promised to their people in the past.

- It was a promise of resurrection.
- There was a promise to resurrect Israel and to resurrect the dead.
- Their problem was with the resurrection of Jesus. Paul asked, "If you believe in God, why is it so hard to believe in resurrection?"

COMPLETE OPPOSITION TO JESUS

Paul then admitted that he was previously in complete opposition to Jesus.

- He had locked up Christians in Jerusalem and approved of their executions.
- He ran them out of the synagogues and tried to make them condemn themselves.
- Paul seemed faithful, but then he admitted it was extreme rage that drove him to pursue Christians beyond Jerusalem.

LIFE CHANGE (ACTS 26:12-23) "UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES"

Armed with zeal, extreme rage, and authority given by the chief priests, Paul traveled to Damascus to find more Christians to trap, arrest, and possibly execute.

- His goal was persecution and destruction.
- Paul then looked directly at King Agrippa, called out his name, and shared what happened next.

KICKING AGAINST THE GOADS

A blinding light and powerful voice drove Paul and his henchmen to the ground.

- Then he heard the question, "Why are you persecuting me?"
- And the statement, "It is hard for you to kick against the goads."
- Christ had been guiding Paul to another direction, but his rage had kept him from change. The result was misery.

FINDING JESUS AND PURPOSE

Answering Paul's question, Jesus revealed Himself and His purpose.

- Paul would be changed from terrorist to evangelist.
- He would become a servant of Jesus and the people he would meet by sharing what he had seen and heard from Jesus.
- **Christians are servants. We serve by sharing what we know.**

"FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT"

Paul shared that Jesus said Jews and Gentiles were in darkness and under the power of Satan.

- He shared that anyone's eyes could be opened to the light and they could receive forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ.
- **Paul's retelling of his conversion exposed everyone in the room to their own darkness.**

THE ONLY POSSIBLE RESPONSE

Again, looking directly at King Agrippa, Paul declared that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

- Given the reality that Jesus is alive, and that He is the Messiah, Paul realized his error and became obedient to God's full plan.
- **Paul's confession of obedience is a challenge to everyone listening.**
- **What will we do with the truth?**

OBEDIENCE THAT LASTS

Paul explained that for over 25 years he had remained faithful to the call on his life.

- He had seen people repent, change, and live lives faithful to Christ all over the Mediterranean world.
- **25 years and 10,000 miles.**
- **How long and how far would we walk to share the truth we know?**

"FOR THIS REASON"

Paul gave the reason and mission of his life, and it was the same reason the Jews arrested him and wanted him dead.

- Paul then pivoted to the present and revealed that his message was not new; he was just saying what was written in the OT.
- The Messiah would suffer, rise from the dead, and save Jews and Gentiles.
- **The real reason is Jesus.**

WORDS OF TRUTH (ACTS 26:24-32)

"YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND!"

After making it clear that Jesus was alive and that He is the fulfillment of OT prophecy, Festus interrupted and called Paul crazy.

- Festus wasn't making an accusation; he was revealing the conviction of his heart.
- Paul responded like Paul. He set the record straight with truth and took the opportunity to speak directly to the king, while informing the entire room of his mission.

"THE KING KNOWS ABOUT THESE MATTERS"

Agrippa would have known the prophecies because he was raised in Judaism, and so would any of the Sanhedrin in the room.

- Agrippa's response was Deflection 101: answer a question with a question.
- If he said no, he would alienate himself from every Jew in the room. If he said yes, then Jesus is the only logical fulfillment of the prophecies. That would mean political ruin.

ALMOST PERSUADED

Agrippa's heart was revealed by his answer to Paul's question. Paul's heart was revealed by his answer to Agrippa's.

- **Paul shared his compassion for every accusatory, judgmental, angry, broken, and lost person in the room.**
- **If they could just believe and be free of the chains *they* were wearing...**

ALMOST FREE

Agrippa, Festus, and Bernice discussed privately, and they concluded that Paul was an innocent man. Paul had committed no crime against Rome, and if not for his appeal to Caesar, he could have been released.

- But Paul valued something more than his freedom: his mission and the opportunity to testify about Jesus to the Roman emperor.
- **God would give him that opportunity.**

TESTIMONY

- We all have a testimony.
- **We may have different experiences, but we have common elements:**
 - **Life before Christ.**
 - **Our life-changing experience with Christ.**
 - **Our life since becoming a Christ follower.**

LOST

- Life without Christ is lostness.
- **We might not have been alone, but we were missing something essential to being whole.**
- **We made every effort to fill the gaps in our lives with whatever we could find that might complete us. It may have been fun, but it brought misery. Then we saw Christ. How ready were we to see Him? How ready are we now?**

GOD'S PLAN

- God has always had a plan for us.
- **Even when we didn't know Him.**
- **Wherever we are in His plan, we can stop and see His hand. If we share what He has done, others can see it too. What is the opportunity He has for us today? Salvation? A new direction? Change? Confession? Repentance? Are we persuaded or not?**