

## *the remotest part of the earth*

#29, bearing My name before the king – Acts 26:1-32

There had been close to 1100 years of the kings in Israel. They had started when Samuel was old. I Sam 8:4-5, Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; 5 and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations."

Though Samuel was displeased he prayed about it. I Sam 8:7, The Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.

And now the last king, Herod Agrippa II, was about to perform one of his last tasks.

1 Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and proceeded to make his defense:

2 "In regard to all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, 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.

### *Paul's early life*

4 "So then, all Jews know my manner of life from my youth up, which from the beginning was spent among my own nation and at 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.

[1.] v:1, You are permitted to speak, As Christians, what king has also commanded us to speak and bear His name?

[3.] v:2-3, I consider myself fortunate, What was Paul's reason feeling fortunate about giving his defense before Agrippa?

[3.] v:2-3 again, When Agrippa heard that Paul knew about his understanding of the law, why or why wouldn't he then know that Paul was not going to lie to him?

[4.] v:4-5, my manner of life, From the list below, chose the reason/s why Paul mentioned his past to Agrippa.

- a) To make the interview longer.
- b) To admit that he did harm to the church as the unsaved Jews are presently doing to him.
- c) To amplify the contrast between his life "in the flesh" and his spiritual rebirth.

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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. And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews. 8 "Why is it considered incredible among you people if God does raise the dead?

9 "So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile 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, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. 11 "And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.

[5.] v:6, the promise made by God to our fathers. Reviewing Acts 13:32, why or why hasn't this promise been fulfilled?

[6.] v:6 again, Reviewing Rom 15:8, why or why isn't this promise also been made for the Gentile?

[7.] v:7, our twelve tribes hope to attain. Is this promise attained by performing the "outward rites of worship" or faith in the finished work of Christ?

[8.] v:8, Paul, banking on the fact that Agrippa is in fact, v:3, expert in all customs and questions among the Jews; knows that he as well as most Jews have learned Dan 12:2, as well as raising the dead by Elijah & Elisha. Therefore what might be the Jews problem with Jesus of Nazareth (Eph 1:19-23) also being raised from the dead?

[9.] v:9-11, having received authority from the chief priests, **List some things Paul admitted doing to the followers of Jesus.**

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[10.] v:9-11 again, From the list below, select where the Christians could find a faithful ally during this persecution.

- a) the Roman governor
- b) Herod Agrippa
- c) the high priest
- d) unsaved Jews and Gentiles
- e) family members

[11.] v:9-11 again, I tried to force them to blaspheme; What kind of mental stress would cause new Christians to just give up and blaspheme?

[12.] So while we are thinking about it, what would cause you to just give up and blaspheme?

### *Paul recounts His conversion*

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 all 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 a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, 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 dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

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### *Paul after His conversion*

19 "So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. 21 "For this reason some Jews seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death.

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 that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."

24 While Paul was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad."

25 But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth. 26 "For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner.

[13.] v:16-18, rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to open their eyes, they may receive forgiveness of sins, **How** might Agrippa mentally responded when he heard Paul recount God's command to him?

[14.] v:19-21, For this reason, **What** reasons did Paul give to Agrippa about some Jews that were trying kill him?

[15.] v:22-23, the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; **Write down a prophetic verse about Christ suffering.**

[16.] v:24, you are out of your mind! **How much** do you think Festus knew about Moses and the prophets?

[17.] v:25-26, For the king knows, **How** did Paul "nicely" reveal to Festus that he was out of his depth?

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

28 Agrippa replied to Paul, " In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian." 29 And Paul said, " I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I 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 aside, they began talking to one another, saying, " This man is not doing anything worthy of death or imprisonment." 32 And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

[18.] v:25-26 again, Sooner or later we all are going to have to go up against "the big guys". Taking a cue from Paul, how should we handle possible outbursts?

[19.] v:27, I know that you do. So thinking through Agrippa's interview with Paul, how might Paul have known this?

[20.] v:28-32, This man might have been set free, Write down the meanings of the following two statements.

a) Paul was outwardly in chains but inwardly, he was free.

b) Festus, Agrippa, Bernice and all who were sitting with them were outwardly free but inwardly, they were in chains.

[21.] v:31, For the rest of their lives what might this group have thought of the high priest's false accusation?

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**NOTES**