

***“Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy —  
The Great Transition, The Glorious Sweep of God’s Abundant Grace — Part 31  
Onward in the Book of Acts to the End of the Great Transition — Paul’s Testimony  
Before King Agrippa***

**Review:**

- ***An Overview of Acts 21-26 — Paul Under Roman Protection & Judgment***
  - ***Chapter 21 — Paul travels from Miletus to Jerusalem & Meets the Jewish Brethren***
  - ***Chapter 22 — Paul is brought to judgment before the council in Jerusalem (Outlines from KJV, 1769 Edition, Red-Letter, w/Chapter Headings, Translator's Notes v1.3)***
    - ***“1 Paul declares how he was converted to the faith,***
    - ***17 and called to his apostleship.***
    - ***22 At the very mentioning of the Gentiles the people exclaim on him.***
    - ***24 He would have been scourged;***
    - ***25 but claiming the privilege of a Roman, he escapes.”***

***Acts 21:40, 22:1-5 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,***

***...***

***[Paul’s defense before Jerusalem magistrates but more importantly, his Jewish accusers including the High Priest himself]***

***22:1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.***

***2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)***

***3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.***

***4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.***

***5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and***

went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

- *Paul in his defense, begins by reviewing his history as a leading persecutor of those believing in a risen Jesus Christ! He was instrumental in Stephen's death as verse 20 will show. SO HE WAS JUST LIKE THESE JEWS TO WHOM HE IS HERE SPEAKING!!! THEY OR THEIR FATHER'S WOULD HAVE KNOWN SAUL WELL, HAVING BEEN IN LEAGUE WITH HIM YEARS BEFORE.*

**Acts 22:6-10**

6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

- *The risen Christ himself had intersected with Paul on the road to Damascus telling him that he was persecuting he himself - quite a revelation no doubt to Saul, and commanding him to go to Damascus to await a messenger that the Lord would send to reveal his future course of service to the Risen Christ Jesus.*

**Acts 22:11-15**

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there*,

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

**15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.**

- ***Saul was blinded literally by the great light of the Risen Lord. He receives his sight by the word of Ananias and is told that he is being sent forth by Christ Jesus to be a witness “to all” of what he had seen and heard.***

**Acts 22:16-21**

**16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.**

**17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;**

**18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.**

**19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:**

**20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.**

**21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.**

- ***Saul responds that he is unworthy for any of this since he was involved in Stephen’s martyrdom, but the word is given that he must now prepare to travel far and wide for the sake of Christ, even to the Gentiles! Amen.***
- ***All of this would so offend these Jews and indeed it did as the next verses indicate. Even the Romans are partially convinced and want to torture Saul to get the whole truth — but he appeals to Caesar as a Roman citizen...***

**22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a *fellow* from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.**

**23 And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,**

**24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.**

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

26 When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was *free* born.

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from *his* bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

### **Introduction:**

- *There is so much here and we looked at it carefully last time. But Paul's speech and what happened afterwards is indicative of how it would go for him as he is kept in bondage and interrogated by other Roman's afterwards, ruler after ruler and kept in chains for years as we will learn today.*

*Paul's testimony is here, whether he is speaking before lower or higher level Roman authorities, or before Jewish leaders, is the same. Paul was one man before the Damascus Road experience and another man afterwards. And it was the Risen Lord Jesus Christ that had made all the difference. Paul's life afterward proved it! That was his testimony and that is the whole essence of what is written here. Historically many heard it and were changed by it — but many refused it and would have taken Paul's life if the Romans had not prevented it as we read here. So, God's power was displayed through his testimony AND through the work of the Lord using human agents as seen here.*

### **Our Outline Today: Paul's Testimony Before Kings & Rulers — God's Power Displayed!**

- **Paul's Testimony — Under Roman Protection (Chapter 23) The Jewish Ruling Council Manages Paul's Interrogation But a Plot to Kill Him Develops and He is Sent to the Governor Felix**

- ***Paul's Testimony — Before Governor Felix (Chapter 24): Examine Paul but find nothing legally changeable against him.***
- ***Paul's Testimony — Before Governor Festus (Chapter 25) Paul is examined by Festus - but apart from what he thought were Jewish religious controversies, he saw nothing to accuse him of, legally, that is.***
- ***Paul's Testimony — Before King Agrippa (Chapter 26) Paul Gives Full Defense Before King Agrippa at the Request of Governor Festus and is Declared Innocent.***

***[Next time we finish the Acts!]***

***I. Paul's Testimony — Under Roman Protection (Chapter 23):***

- ***The Jewish Ruling Council Manages Paul's Interrogation But a Plot to Kill Him Develops and He is Sent to the Governor Felix***
- ***"1 As Paul pleads his cause,***
- ***2 Ananias commands them to strike him.***
- ***7 Dissension among his accusers.***
- ***11 God encourages him.***
- ***14 The Jews' vow to kill Paul,***
- ***20 is declared unto the chief captain.***
- ***27 He sends him to Felix the governor."***

***Acts 23:1-5***

***1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.***

***2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.***

***3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?***

***4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?***

***5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.***

***Acts 23:6-15***

***6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.***

7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

**9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes *that were of the Pharisees'* part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.**

**10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring *him* into the castle.**

**11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.**

12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

**15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.**

16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto *him*, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

18 So he took him, and brought *him* to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto *him*, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aside privately, and asked *him*, What is that thou hast to tell me?

**20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly.**

**21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.**

**22 So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, See *thou* tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.**

**23 And he called unto *him* two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;**

**24 And provide *them* beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring *him* safe unto Felix the governor. [Remember Martin Luther's abduction!]**

**25 And he wrote a letter after this manner:**

**26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix *sendeth* greeting.**

27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:

29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

30 And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what *they had* against him. Farewell.

31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.

32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:

33 Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

**34 And when the governor had read *the letter*, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that *he was* of Cilicia;**

**35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.**

## **II. Paul's Testimony — Before Governor Felix (Chapter 24):**

- ***Roman Governors, Felix (and then Festus, his replacement) Examine Paul but find nothing legally changeable against him:***
- ***"1 Paul being accused by Tertullus the orator,***
- ***10 answers for his life and doctrine.***

- **24 He preaches Christ to the governor and his wife.**
- **26 The governor hopes for a bribe, but in vain.**
- **27 Felix, succeeded by Festus, leaves Paul in prison.”**

**Acts 24:10-13**

**10** Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

**11** Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.

**12** And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

**13** Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

**Acts 24:14-23**

**14** But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: *[as identified next, regarding resurrection]*

**15** And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

**16** And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and *toward* men.

**17** Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

**18** Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

**19** Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.

**20** Or else let these same *here* say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,

**21** Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

**22** And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of *that* way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

**23** And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let *him* have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.



...

**Acts 24:24-27 [Paul left bound by new governor, Festus]**

**24** And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

**25** And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

**26** He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

**[Felix replaced by Festus]**

**27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.**

### **III. Paul's Testimony — Before Governor Festus (Chapter 25):**

- ***Paul is examined by Festus - but apart from what he thought were Jewish religious controversies, he saw nothing to accuse him of, legally, that is:***
- “1 The Jews accuse Paul before Festus.
- 8 He answers for himself,
- **11 and appeals unto Caesar.**
- 14 Afterwards Festus opens his matter to king Agrippa;
- 23 and he is brought forth.
- 25 Festus clears him of having done anything worthy of death.”

**Acts 25:1-6**

**1** Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

**2** Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,

**3** And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.

**4** But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly *thither*.

**5** Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with *me*, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

**6** And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought.

**Acts 25:7-12**

**7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.**

**8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.**

**9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?**

**10 Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.**

**11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.**

**12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.**

- ***This judgment will be certified by King Agrippa at the end of Acts chapter 26 a we shall soon see.***

**13 And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus.**

**14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:**

**15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, desiring *to have* judgment against him.**

**16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.**

**17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth.**

**18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:**

**19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.**

20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked *him* whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

- *Paul is asked if he would allow being judged by the Jewish authorities here. But his answer is that he will not agree to that but will accept judgment by the Emperor.*

**Acts 25:21-27**

21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar.

22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.

24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and *also* here, crying that he ought not to live any longer.

25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.

27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes *laid* against him.

- *We see clearly here the difficulty from the Roman perspective and from the point of view of “pax Romana”. Local religious groups were to be respected as long as civil unrest was avoided. But here the situation was dire. What would the King do? He rules at the whim of the Emperor. And the governor seems to be passing the buck, probably not wisely either. For the king is not held in high regard by the people.*

#### **IV. Paul's Testimony – Before King Agrippa (Chapter 26):**

- ***Paul Gives Full Defense Before King Agrippa at the Request of Governor Festus and is Declared Innocent.***

***[READ ] Acts 26:1-7***

**1** Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself.

Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:

**2** I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

**3** Especially *because I know* thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

**4** My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;

**5** Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

**6** And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:

**7** Unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, instantly serving *God* day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

***[READ ] Acts 26:8-13***

**8** Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

**9** I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

**10** Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them*.

**11** And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.

**12** Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

**13** At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

***[READ ] Acts 26:14-20***

**14** And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? *it is hard* for thee to kick against the pricks.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

**[READ ] Acts 26:21-26**

21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill *me*.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

23 That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

**[READ ] Acts 26:27-30**

27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:

**[READ ] Acts 26:31-32**

**31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.**

**32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.**

- **Verse 3 — “I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.”**
  - ***Testifying before even kings - Acts 9:15 “But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel”***
  - ***He often begins by speaking about himself — but here he is making such a sharp contrast since his main focus is on the Risen Christ Jesus!***
- **Verses 8-9 — The contrast here is kind of overwhelming, but it shows Saul’s mind at that time to be in conflict, caught between heaven and hell as it were...**

**Acts 26:8-9**

**8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?**

**9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.**

- **Verses 9-12 speaks further of his evil ways until Christ intersected with him on the road to Damascus... [as in chapter 22]**
- **Verses 14-19 Christ’s words to Paul as recorded here complete that aspect of his testimony before Agrippa:**

**14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. [not in chapter 22]**

**15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.**

- ***Saul was persecuting the Lord, the Christ risen from the dead***  
**...**

**16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;**

- *Take full note here that Christ was making Saul a witness of “what he had seen” and “what he would be communicating to him in the future”.*

*This is very important to know and explains how Paul can in his letters say the words that he writes are “the words of Christ himself”!*

**17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,**

- *His commission and the Lord’s work though him was now made clear.*

**18 To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.**

- *There are some key words used here that are so indicative of Paul’s preaching from then on and throughout his many years of missionary preaching and teaching in the churches.*
- *Turn from the darkness of satanic lies to the glorious light of revealed truth / from satan to God / to receive forgiveness of sins / and inheritance among those sanctified / by faith that is in him. Amen and amen.*

**19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:**

- *And his many years of service through three missionary journeys and years of bondage here in Israel, it was so true. He was NOT disobedient ...*

**Acts 26:20-23**

**20** But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

**21** For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill *me*.

**22** Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

**23** That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

- *“None other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come”, regarding their own promised Messiah, and that ...*
  - *“... Christ should suffer”: As in Isaiah 53 no doubt*
  - *“And that he should be the first that should rise from the dead”:*
  - *“and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles”:*
  - *What might the king’s response tooth’s be, seeing that he is surrounded by the leaders of the nation and the Roman governor appointed by his friend the emperor Claudius and, of course, for all to see, his quite apparent consort (and sister) Bernice. Oh my! But first Festus responds:*
- **Verse 24** - “Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.”
    - *Intent: So devoted to the books [much learning] that one has lost touch with reality [mad]*
  - **Verse 25** — “I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness [reason]”



- ***Intent: I am reminded in reading this of Paul's reference to Ps. 51 in Romans 3:4 "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged." Surely the apostle felt all alone here before all of these dignitaries including the Roman trained and appointed King of Israel and the chief Roman administrator ...***

***Acts 26:27-29 [These are probably the most important words in the chapter if we should risk such a statement ...]***

**27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.**

**28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.**

**29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.**

- ***Why not believe? Agrippa? Bernice? Festus? Why not? Well, the blindness of the human heart given over to lies from one's birth are enough, are they not??***
- ***What has Paul said about himself in these verses that might have made his testimony here more powerful than it might seem to us? Your thoughts?***
- ***There is much controversy today, fueled by translations of the modern variety, since no older translations reflected these modernist views, that what is intended here by the Greek language here is a matter of timing and not substance, as if more time and more discussion might have made the difference. But verse 29 makes it quite clear in the context that this was a matter not of time allowed or available, but of the reality of the situation. Agrippa believed a little maybe, but he did not really believe what Paul had been testifying had changed his own life and led to his persecution and imprisonment.***
- ***Verse 29 indicates that Paul understood Agrippa's words "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" to mean that he was "nearly convinced" but "not quite". So he says what he did: "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me***

this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.”

- ***And that exchange ended the meeting! Paul is declared innocent and that's that. No more discussions were needed or invited:***

- ***Verses 30-32***

***Acts 26:30-32***

**30** And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:

**31** And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

**32** Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.

- ***And so many witnesses end, with now faith response on the part of the lost. But was all in vain? Surely not. For these words have give down in history and have no doubt led to the salvation of so many and the encouragement of God's children down through the ages.***

***Paul's testimony was bold indeed. Is ours?***

***Amen and amen.***