

# Acts 26 Commentary

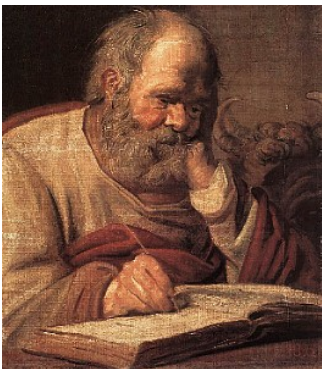
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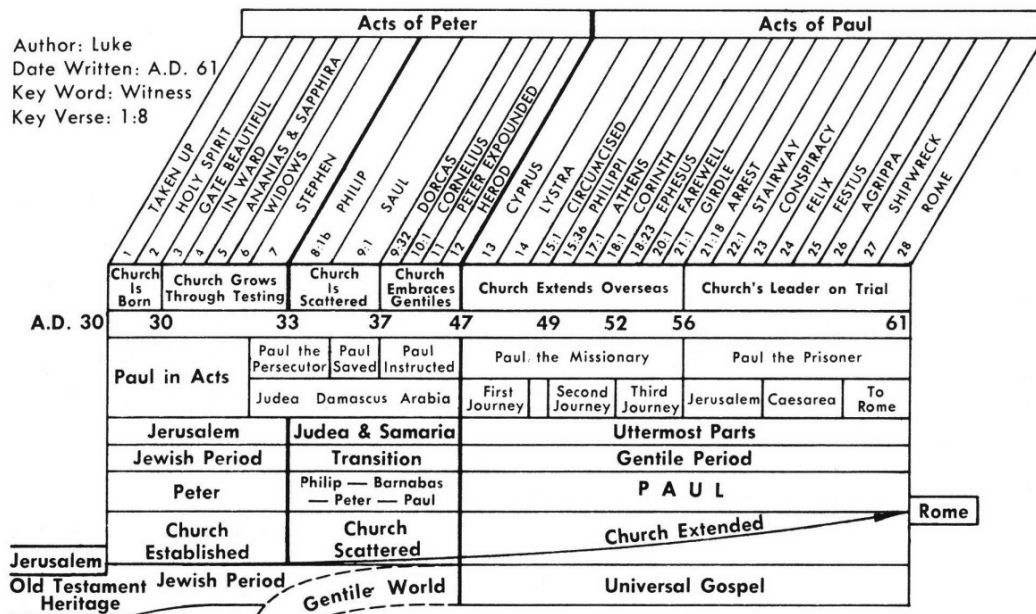
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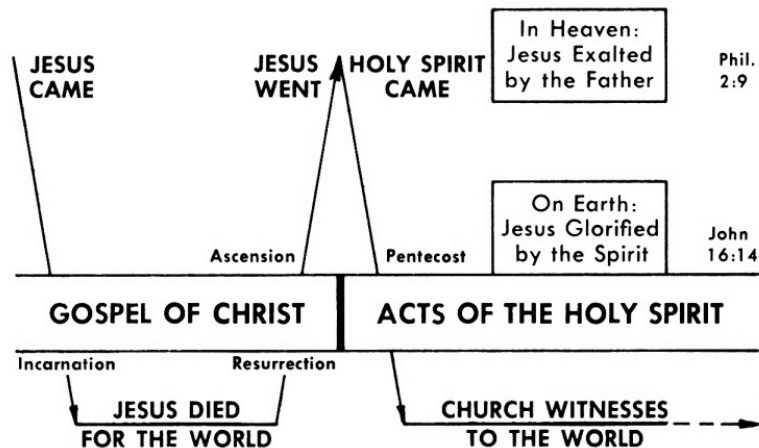


Author: Luke  
Date Written: A.D. 61  
Key Word: Witness  
Key Verse: 1:8



Click chart to enlarge  
Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

## THE EXPANDING WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT-EMPOWERED CHURCH



Click chart to enlarge

## John Hannah's Outline for Third Missionary Journey (see [map](#))

- D. The third missionary journey of Paul (Acts 18:23-21:16)
  1. The ministry in Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:23)
  2. The ministry in Ephesus (Acts 18:24-19:41)
    - a. Instruction of Apollos (Acts 18:24-28)
    - b. Instruction of some of John's followers (Acts 19:1-7)
    - c. Instruction of the Ephesians (Acts 19:8-20)
    - d. Instructions concerning his plans (Acts 19:21-22)
    - e. The riots in Ephesus (Acts 19:23-41)
  3. The ministry in Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 20:1-5)
  4. The ministry in Troas (Acts 20:6-12)
  5. The ministry in Miletus (Acts 20:13-38)
    - a. His journey to Miletus (Acts 20:13-16)
    - b. His message to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17-35)
      1. Concerning his ministry (Acts 20:17-27)
      2. Concerning the church (Acts 20:28-35)
    - c. His farewell to the Ephesians (Acts 20:36-38)
  6. The ministry at Tyre (Acts 21:1-6)
    - a. His journey to Tyre (Acts 21:1-3)
    - b. His ministry in Tyre (Acts 21:4-6)

7. The ministry in Caesarea (Acts 21:7-16)
  - a. Agabus' prediction (Acts 21:7-12)
  - b. Paul's reply (Acts 21:13-14)
  - c. The journey toward Jerusalem (Acts 21:15-16)
- E. The journey of Paul to Rome (Acts 21:17-28:31)
  1. His witness in Jerusalem (Acts 21:17-23:35)
    - a. Paul's report to the elders (Acts 21:17-26)
    - b. Paul's arrest (Acts 21:27-36)
    - c. Paul's defense (Acts 21:37-23:10)
      1. His first defense (Acts 21:37-22:23)
        - a. The background (Acts 21:37-40)
        - b. The content (Acts 22:1-21)
        - c. The result (Acts 22:22-23)
      2. His second defense (Acts 22:24-23:10)
        - a. The background (Acts 22:24-29)
        - b. The council (Acts 22:30)
        - c. The content (Acts 23:1-9)
        - d. The conflict (Acts 23:10)
    - d. Paul's deliverance (Acts 23:11-35)
      1. The encouragement (Acts 23:11)
      2. The plot (Acts 23:12-16)
      3. The counterplot (Acts 23:17-24)
      4. The letter to Felix (Acts 23:25-30)
      5. The deliverance to Felix (Acts 23:31-35)
  2. His witness in Caesarea (Acts 24:1-26:32)
    - a. Paul's defense before Felix (Acts 24:1-27)
      1. The setting (Acts 24:1)
      2. The accusations of Tertullus (Acts 24:2-9)
      3. The reply of Paul (Acts 24:10-21)
      4. The consequences (Acts 24:22-27)
    - b. Paul's defense before Festus (Acts 25:1-12)
      1. The setting (Acts 25:1-5)
      2. The trial (Acts 25:6-11)
      3. The result (Acts 25:12)
    - c. Paul's defense before Agrippa (Acts 25:13-26:32)
      1. The arrival of Agrippa (Acts 25:13)
      2. Festus' presentation of Paul's case (Acts 25:14-22)
      3. Festus' presentation of Paul (Acts 25:23-27)
      4. Paul's defense before Agrippa (Acts 26:1-23)
      5. Paul's answer to Festus (Acts 26:24-26)
      6. Paul's interaction with Agrippa (Acts 26:27-29)
      7. The conclusion (Acts 26:30-32)
  3. His witness on the way to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:15)
    - a. His witness aboard ship (Acts 27:1-44)
    - b. His witness on Malta (Acts 28:1-15)
      1. Paul's miraculous preservation (Acts 28:1-6)
      2. Paul's healing of Publius' father (Acts 28:7-10)
      3. Paul's continued journey toward Rome (Acts 28:11-15)
  4. His witness in Rome (Acts 28:16-31)
    - a. The occasion for his witness (Acts 28:16-22)
    - b. The content of his witness (Acts 28:23-28)
    - c. The result of his witness (Acts 28:29)
    - d. The summary of Paul's witness in Rome (Acts 28:30-31)

■ [Hannah's Bible Outlines](#) - Recommended Resource

NET Acts 26:1 So Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." Then Paul held out his hand and began his defense:

GNT Acts 26:1 γρ ππας δ πρ ς τ ν Πα λον φη, πιτρ πετα σοι περ σεαυτο λ γειν. τ τε Πα λος κτε νας τ ν χε ρα πελογε το,

NLT Acts 26:1 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You may speak in your defense." So Paul, gesturing with his hand, started his defense:

KJV Acts 26:1 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:

ESV Acts 26:1 So Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense:

CSB Acts 26:1 Agrippa said to Paul, "It is permitted for you to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and began his defense:

NIV Acts 26:1 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense:

NKJ Acts 26:1 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself:

NRS Acts 26:1 Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and began to defend himself:

YLT Acts 26:1 And Agrippa said unto Paul, 'It is permitted to thee to speak for thyself;' then Paul having stretched forth the hand, was making a defence:

NAB Acts 26:1 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You may now speak on your own behalf." So Paul stretched out his hand and began his defense.

NJB Acts 26:1 Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'You have leave to speak on your own behalf.' And Paul held up his hand and began his defence:

GWN Acts 26:1 Agrippa said to Paul, "You're free to speak for yourself." Paul acknowledged King Agrippa and then began his defense.

BBE Acts 26:1 And Agrippa said to Paul, You may put your cause before us. Then Paul, stretching out his hand, made his answer, saying:

- **You are permitted to speak for yourself.** Acts 25:16. Pr. 18:13, 17. Jn 7:51.
- **Then Paul stretched out his hand** . Pr. 1:24. Ezek 16:27. Ro. 10:21.
- **to make his defense** Acts 26:2. Acts 22:1.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries
- [Sermons on Acts 26:1-32 - most of these are older works](#)
- [Paul's Defense before Agrippa - D C Hughes](#)

## THE THIRD RECORD OF PAUL'S RADICAL CONVERSION

### Paul's defense speeches in Acts

1. the Jerusalem mob (Acts 22:1 - 23);
2. the commander (Acts 22:24 - 30);
3. the Sanhedrin (Acts 23:1 - 10);
4. Felix (Acts 24:10 - 23);
5. Festus (Acts 25:8 - 12);
6. King Agrippa II (Acts 26:1 - 32);
7. Jews at Rome (Acts 28:17 - 28).

Imagine the crowd of "rich and famous" all of whom were listening to these potentially life changing words. One wonders if we will see any of these "rich and famous" in heaven? It certainly won't be because they did not receive a clear presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! May we all be so faithful to boldly testify as the Spirit gives us utterance, whether it be before the "rich and famous" or before the "poor and downcast." **Lord, find us faithful! Amen**

This is the longest of Paul's speeches in Acts and obviously his longest defense.

**Jack Arnold** - Acts Chapter 26 is one of the most dynamic scenes in the whole Bible. It is in this chapter that the Apostle Paul stands before King Agrippa and gives his personal testimony to this mighty king in order to win him to Christ. This may well be the high point in Paul's ministry. It should be pointed out that Paul is not on trial before Agrippa, even though he makes a defense before him. He was before Agrippa in order that Agrippa might help Festus, the Roman governor of Judea, to discover some concrete evidence that he was guilty. Paul had appealed to Caesar when tried before Festus, and Festus had granted that appeal, but Paul was innocent. Festus could find nothing in his life with which to charge him, and this put him in a most embarrassing situation to send Paul all the way to Rome to appear before Caesar, who was then the Emperor Nero, with no charges which would hold water. This was also a time of entertainment for Agrippa because he wanted to tickle his fancy by hearing a little more about the Way made up of people who called themselves Christians and followers of Christ. He also wanted to know something more about this man, Paul the pest, as he was called by the unbelieving Jews. ([Sermon](#))

Here is Jack Arnold's outline for Acts 26 focusing on the apostle Paul

#### **Paul Presents His Testimony to Agrippa - Acts 26:1-21**

- Acts 26:1-3 His Congeniality
- Acts 26:4-5 His Character
- Acts 26:6-8 His Confidence
- Acts 26:9-11 His Cruelty
- Acts 26:12-15 His Conversion
- Acts 26:16-18 His Commission
- Acts 26:19-21 His Compliance

#### **Paul Preaches the Gospel to Agrippa - Acts 26:22-25**

- Acts 26:22 His Commitment to the Old Covenant
- Acts 26:23 His Commitment to the New Covenant
- Acts 26:24-25 His Clash with Festus

#### **Paul Pleads with Agrippa to Accept Christ - Acts 26:26-29**

- Acts 26:26 His Calm Assurance about Agrippa
- Acts 26:27-28 His Challenge to Agrippa
- Acts 26:29 His Call for Agrippa to Believe

#### **Paul Proclaimed Innocent by Agrippa - Acts 26:30-32**

**Gilbrant** sets the stage - Consider the setting. King Agrippa sat there in all the finery of his royal robes (Acts 25:23-27 for context). Beside him sat his beautiful 32-year-old sister [Bernice](#), "blazing in all her jewels." (ED: See Stained glass of Agrippa and Bernice and click to enlarge - look at their expressions!) All around were the town notables dressed in their best. Then there were the tribunes in their uniforms with glittering swords at their sides. King Agrippa turned to Paul and told him he was permitted to speak for himself. Paul did not hesitate. Filled once again with the power of the Holy Spirit, he began his defense. (Complete Biblical Library Commentary)

**Agrippa** - also known as [Herod Agrippa II](#) (See [map of his kingdom](#)) - Son of [Herod Agrippa I](#) ([map of his kingdom](#) - maps are copyright Holman, do not reproduce) and Cypros, grandniece of Herod the Great. Being but 17 at his father's death (A.D. 44), he was thought too young to succeed his father in the kingdom, but six years later (A.D. 50) the emperor Claudius conferred on him Chalcis which had been under his uncle, shortly before deceased (A.D. 48). Then (A.D. 52) he was transferred to the tetrarchies formerly held by Philip and Lysanias with the title "king." Accurately he is called so in Acts 25:13; Acts 26:2; Acts 26:7. Nero added

several cities of Galilee and Persea to his kingdom (A.D. 55). Five years later Paul pleaded before him, who naturally consulted him on a question of Jewish law). (See [Festus](#))

The great pomp (see Acts 25:23+) with which he and his sister Berenice (whose connection with him caused grave suspicion) "entered the auditorium accompanied by the commanders and the prominent men of the city," accorded with his character, fond of show. In the last Roman war Agrippa II took part with the Romans in the destruction of his own nation in the same spirit of cold cynicism with which he met the impassioned appeal of the apostle. After the fall of Jerusalem he retired with Berenice to Rome, where he died in the third year of Trajan (A.D. 100).

He was the last of the race of Herod commemorated in history. Acts 25:13 represents his losing no time in going to Caesarea to salute the new Roman governor. In exact consonance with this Josephus (Bell. 2:15, section 1; Life, section 11) records his anxiety to stand well with the Roman governors, Alexander in Egypt, and Gessius Florus in Judaea, in the latter case Berenice accompanying him. - [See Main Article on the Herods](#) for discussion of the Herods listed below:

- 1. HEROD THE GREAT (Mt 2; Lk 1:5+),
- 2. HEROD THE TETRARCH (Mt 14:1, etc.; Mk 7:17, etc.; Lk 3:1; 3:19; 9:7; Acts 13:1).
- 3. HEROD PHILIP I.
- 4. HEROD PHILIP II.
- 5. HEROD AGRIPPA I.
- 6. HEROD AGRIPPA II.

**You are permitted to speak for yourself**- In other words Paul did not require a spokesman or lawyer. "You are at liberty to speak for yourself," *TCNT*...You have permission, *Phillips*... You may put your case before us, *BB*. Festus had introduced Paul in Acts 25:22-27+ but now King Agrippa takes over a "[master of ceremonies](#)" (so to speak). This is an arrogant move for "Agrippa as a king and guest presides at the grand display while Festus has simply introduced Paul." (Robertson)

**Permitted** (have permission)(2010)([epitrepo](#)) means Paul was allowed to speak on his own behalf. This is not a trial and there are no charges pending against Paul. In fact that is the predicament for Festus finds himself in for he needs to concoct some charges to send with the Roman escort who will take Paul to the Emperor, Nero. **Epitrepo** in **Acts** - Acts 21:39; Acts 21:40; Acts 26:1; Acts 27:3; Acts 28:16

**MacArthur** comments that "Paul's testimony contains two main themes: Jesus Christ's resurrection proves Him to be the Messiah, and Paul's transformed life proves the reality of Christ's resurrection. He masterfully weaves the saving gospel through this first-person account." (Acts Commentary)

**POSB** notes that "It was the custom for a prisoner to raise his hand to the court as an act of appreciation for the privilege to speak." (Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Acts)

**Then Paul stretched out his hand** - Not to call for silence (not for silence as in Acts 12:17+; Acts 13:16+ or Acts 21:40+) but in the common gesture of an orator opening his discourse. This is a dramatic gesture on Paul's part. Some say this was as a "salute" to the king. Don't you wish you could have seen this scene. ([Watch the Video of this scene](#)). His hand was chained to a Roman soldier (Acts 26:29+). The text does not state it but clearly **Paul is a man filled with the Holy Spirit**, for as Jesus Himself declared to His disciples

But **be on your guard** ([present imperative](#)); for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and **you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them**. (Exactly what Paul is doing in Acts 26) "And the Gospel must first be preached to all the nations. "And when they arrest you and deliver you up, **do not be anxious beforehand** ([present imperative](#)) about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for ([term of explanation](#)) it is not you who speak, but **it is the Holy Spirit**. (Mark 13:9-11)

**To make his defense** ([imperfect tense](#))(626)([apologeomai](#) from **apó** = from + **lógos** = speech) literally means to speak oneself off, hence to plead for oneself, to defend or speak or plead for oneself before a tribunal or elsewhere, seeking to convince the audience he was innocent of the charges. Of course in this case Paul was not charged with anything so his "defense" is actually his conversion, which in a sense is a defense of the veracity of the supernatural Gospel and the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, Whom he had personally seen. As **John MacArthur** says "Paul's testimony contains two main themes: Jesus Christ's resurrection proves Him to be the Messiah, and Paul's transformed life proves the reality of Christ's resurrection. He masterfully weaves the saving gospel through this first-person account." (New Testament Commentary – Acts) **Apologeomai** in NT - Lk. 12:11; Lk. 21:14; Acts 19:33; Acts 24:10; Acts 25:8; Acts 26:1; Acts 26:2; Acts 26:24; Rom. 2:15; 2 Co. 12:19



**Spurgeon** - Three times we have in Holy Writ a graphic report of the conversion of Paul. This may be accounted for partly from its being one of the most remarkable events of early sacred history, Paul having had a greater effect upon the Christian Church than any other living man. At the same time I think it teaches us that the Holy Spirit sets especial store by the facts connected with this very remarkable conversion. If he gives it three times, in the sacred volume, we ought to give it a triple attention, and see if we cannot learn therefrom.

**Robertson** - He has no word of censure of his enemies or of resentment, but seizes the opportunity to preach Christ to such a distinguished company which he does with "singular dignity" (Furneaux). He is now bearing the name of Christ "before kings" (Acts 9:15).

**Joseph Parker** wrote, "We are afraid to speak about ourselves; and, in truth, I am not surprised at the fear... We think it ought to be something between ourselves and God. Paul never thought so."

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#### TODAY IN THE WORD - DEVOTIONAL

We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. - 2 Corinthians 5:20

Nineteenth-century pastor and Bible teacher Albert Barnes wrote, "'Sinners often treat God's messengers kindly, and do much to make them comfortable, and hear them gladly, while they themselves are unwilling to do the thing which is demanded of them--to repent and believe the Gospel. They expect that their kind intentions will be accepted in the place of what God demands--repentance and the forsaking of their sins.'"

We're not sure how much, if anything, King Agrippa did to make Paul comfortable during the apostle's imprisonment in Caesarea. But he did give Paul a full chance to present his defense and explain the real reason behind his arrest in Jerusalem and the controversy swirling around him. Since Paul was passionate about the Person of Jesus Christ and the gospel ministry, it's not surprising that his defense before Agrippa was delivered with passion. Paul used all of his persuasive powers to present the truth to Agrippa, knowing that this king with a Jewish background was well-versed in "'Jewish customs and controversies'" (Acts 26:3).

It is likely that what we have in Acts 26 is a summary of Paul's speech. He set the proceedings in the right framework when he told Agrippa that the heart of the issue was "'what God has promised our fathers'" (Acts 26:6). Later, Paul explained this hope as the death and resurrection of the Messiah (Acts 26:23). Paul took the king step by step through his own Jewish background and upbringing. The apostle mentioned his zeal as a persecutor of Christians (Acts 26:9-11), and his conversion on the Damascus road. With eloquence and conviction, he explained the gospel to Agrippa and those listening as repentance for sin and faith in Jesus. Paul knew that Agrippa was "'familiar with these things'", and so he spoke freely. But the apostle was not content with a solid defense. He wanted Agrippa and the whole audience to believe the gospel. Paul's direct question to the king must have made him squirm a little. Agrippa's edgy retort reveals a man under the searchlight of conviction--maybe the closest the king ever came to believing in Christ. But Paul had done his part in presenting the gospel and asking for a decision.

**APPLY THE WORD** Today's study reminds us that once we have presented Christ and given a person the opportunity to receive Him, the results are God's responsibility. This brings us back to the place of prayer in evangelism. If we have a passion for souls, we will also be passionate in praying for the unsaved friends and relatives on our own list, and for a world of people who need Christ.

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#### TODAY IN THE WORD - DEVOTIONAL

Does a trial by jury guarantee justice? Not according to Chicago Tribune columnist Eric Zorn: "Juries can be wrong. Dead wrong. Panel members can assemble in a little room after trial and agree as one to illogical, bigoted, emotional or just plain dull-witted conclusions that result in the administration of whimsy, not justice." Citing dozens of examples, he continues: "Juries can and clearly have been known to acquit the guilty and convict the innocent. Sometimes they are overly skeptical, sometimes they are overly credulous. Sometimes prosecutors, defense attorneys or witnesses misrepresent the facts to them or hide facts from them."

As Paul also found, human justice is an uncertain and often flawed enterprise. No charge was ever proven against the apostle, and in today's reading Agrippa admitted that they had no reason to hold him except for his appeal to Caesar (Acts 26:32). Acts 24:1-26:32 are full of legal talk about accusations and hearings on guilt and innocence. But the overriding emphasis from Luke's standpoint and from Paul's was still the truth and the spread of the Gospel. That's why the apostle's defense before Agrippa was **much more than just a protest of his innocence of the charges against him. It was a superb summary of the essence of Christianity in which Paul defended two key propositions.**

**First**, he reminded the king that faith in a risen, divine Christ is the heart of Christianity (Acts 26:1-8). Paul was on trial because of his belief that God raises the dead, although such a proposition was actually part of the promise that God had made to Israel.

**Second**, Paul maintained that Jesus' resurrection was attested by his personal encounter with the risen Christ and by the Scriptures themselves (Acts 26:12-23). Paul wasn't alone in his testimony. Moses and the prophets also said that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead.

**APPLY THE WORD** Today's text is an example of how a believer can weave Scripture and experience to make a compelling witness. Every time you tell someone about Jesus you are helping to write a new chapter in the unfinished story of the church.

**Acts 26:2 "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;**

BGT Acts 26:2 Περι πντων ν γκαλομαι π ουδαων, βασιλε γρ ππα, γημαι μαυτ ν μακ ριον π σο μ λλων σ μερον πολογε σθαι

NET Acts 26:2 "Regarding all the things I have been accused of by the Jews, King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate that I am about to make my defense before you today,

GNT Acts 26:2 Περι πντων ν γκαλομαι π ουδαων, βασιλε γρ ππα, γημαι μαυτ ν μακ ριον π σο μ λλων σ μερον πολογε σθαι

NLT Acts 26:2 "I am fortunate, King Agrippa, that you are the one hearing my defense today against all these accusations made by the Jewish leaders,

KJV Acts 26:2 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:

ESV Acts 26:2 "I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews,

CSB Acts 26:2 "I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that today I am going to make a defense before you about everything I am accused of by the Jews,

NIV Acts 26:2 "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews,

NKJ Acts 26:2 "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,

NRS Acts 26:2 "I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews,

YLT Acts 26:2 'Concerning all things of which I am accused by Jews, king Agrippa, I have thought myself happy, being about to make a defence before thee to-day,

NAB Acts 26:2 "I count myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that I am to defend myself before you today against all the charges made against me by the Jews,

NJB Acts 26:2 'I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, in that it is before you I am to answer today all the charges made against me by the Jews,

GWN Acts 26:2 "King Agrippa, I think I'm fortunate today to stand in front of you and defend myself against every charge that the Jews brought against me.

- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## PAUL'S BLESSED OPPORTUNITY

The English word **OPPORTUNITY** is derived from the Latin phrase "**ob portu**." In ancient times, before modern harbors, ships had to wait for the timing of the tide before they could make it safely to port. Thus "**OB PORTU**," described the ship waiting "**FOR PORT**," ready to seize the moment when it could ride the tide into safe harbor. The captain knew that if he missed the passing tide, the "ob portu," the ship would have to wait for another tide to come in. God gives each of us many "ob portu's", but we must be spiritually wise and Spirit filled in order to see and seize them. As Charles Swindoll said "We are all faced with a series of great



opportunities (ob portu's) brilliantly disguised as impossible situations." Shakespeare's famous line from Julius Caesar conveys the same thought: "There is a tide in the affairs of men (an "ob portu"), Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat; And we must take the current when it serves, Or lose our ventures." And so Paul a man filled with the Spirit of power and discernment recognized that God had given him a once in a lifetime "window of opportunity" before King Agrippa II and so he seized the moment. No wonder he would later write from prison that all believers should be continually ([present tense](#)) be "**making the most of (Redeeming - KJV)** your time ([kairos](#) = "opportunity"), because the days are evil. (Eph 5:16). Dear follower of Christ, are you daily filled with the Spirit, so that you too like Paul might recognize those "once in a lifetime" opportunities that God [providentially](#) brings across your path?

#### Related Resource:

- [Redeeming the Time](#)

Most of the versions have "**fortunate**" but that reminds me of the Roman goddess "[Fortuna](#)" ([Greek equivalent](#)) and congers up the thought that Paul was there by "**good fortune**." It was not by some stroke of fate that Paul was now before Agrippa. Paul was there by **good** (God's [providence](#) and he considered this as a blessing from God (cf James 1:17<sup>+</sup>). Why? Because this was what Jesus had promised (Acts 9:15<sup>+</sup>), [prophesying](#) that he would proclaim the Gospel "before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;" and his golden opportunity had arrived and Paul clearly recognized it as such. And so to Paul, this was a blessing from the Lord!

**Dr J Vernon McGee** - The appearance of Paul before Agrippa is, in my judgment, the high point in the entire ministry of this apostle. It is a fulfillment of the prophecy that he should appear before kings and rulers (Acts 9:15<sup>+</sup>). Undoubtedly it was God's will that he should come before King Agrippa....There are several features about this chapter that we ought to note before we get into Paul's message before King Agrippa. First of all, I want to make it clear again that Paul is not on trial...He is preaching the Gospel. In view of the fact that this great apostle had appealed to Caesar, not even King Agrippa could condemn him, and he is certainly out of the hands of Governor Festus (cf Acts 26:32)...They no longer had the authority to condemn him....so Paul...is trying to win these men for Christ. This was not a trial, but it was a public appearance of Paul before King Agrippa and the court so that they might learn firsthand from the apostle what "**that Way**" really is....Therefore they have this public appearance to explain **The Way**. (**ED**: See discussion of The Way). I think this was one of the most splendid opportunities that any minister ever had to preach Christ. There has never again been an opportunity quite like this....This stirs the imagination. I trust that somehow we can picture this scene before us as we listen to the message of Paul. This elaborate gathering is for just one purpose: to hear from a notable prisoner by the name of Paul. He is the one who has already been over the greater part of the Roman Empire, certainly the eastern part of it, preaching The Way. When the door of that great throne room swings open, a prisoner in chains is ushered into this colorful scene. ...This is the man who teaches and preaches the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Christ for men because they are sinners and need a Savior. This is the one who can speak with authority about the new Way. And they will listen to this man because he knows how to speak and because he is an intelligent man. The light of heaven is on his face. He is no longer Saul of Tarsus but Paul the apostle. What a contrast he is to that gay, giddy crowd of nobility gathered there!...I do not think, frankly, that Paul was physically attractive. Yet he had the dynamic kind of attraction which the grace of God gives to a man. He was energized by the Holy Spirit. Oh, that you and I might be able to say with Paul, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20<sup>+</sup>). Now let's turn our eyes from the glitter and the glamour of the occasion to the two men who stand out in this assembly: Agrippa and Paul. What a contrast! One of them is in purple, the other is in prison garb. One is on a throne, the other is in shackles. One wears a crown, the other is in chains. (**Ed**: But he will one day wear a crown - cf 2 Ti 4:8<sup>+</sup>). Agrippa is a king, but in the slavery of sin (Ro 6:17, 20<sup>+</sup>, Jn 8:34, 2 Pe 2:19<sup>+</sup>). Paul is a chained prisoner, rejoicing in the freedom of sins forgiven and liberty in Christ (Jn 8:32, 34, Ro 6:7<sup>+</sup>). Agrippa is an earthly king who could not free Paul nor himself. Paul is an ambassador of the King (2 Cor 5:20<sup>+</sup>) who had freed him and who could free Agrippa from the damning effects of sin. ([Thru the Bible - Notes on Acts 26:1](#))

**Thomas Constable** - Jesus had also told His disciples that before the Tribulation enemies would deliver them to prison and bring them before kings and governors for His name's sake (Acts 9:15<sup>+</sup>). This, He said, would lead to an opportunity for their testimony (Luke 21:12-13<sup>+</sup>). This is exactly what happened to Paul, and he used this opportunity to give his testimony, as this chapter records. ([Acts 26 Commentary](#))

**Fortunate** (3107) ([makarios](#) from root **makar**, but others say from **mak** = large or lengthy) means to be happy, but not in the usual sense of happiness based on positive circumstances. From the Biblical perspective **Makarios** describes the person who is free from daily cares and worries because his every breath and circumstance is in the hands of His Maker Who gives him such an assurance (such a "blessing"). So here is Paul in chains, but sincerely expressing the blessing. Now that's a proper perspective on not looking at one's circumstances, but at the sovereign God in control of all circumstances!

**In regard to all the things of which I am accused by the Jews**- See the lawyer Tertullus' accusations (Acts 24:5-9<sup>+</sup>) leveled

against Paul on behalf of the Jewish religious leaders who had traveled from Jerusalem to Caesarea to re-open the case in the court of Festus.

**Longenecker**- Since Festus had already said that Paul had not committed a capital crime (cf. Acts 25:25+), Paul chose to defend himself only against the charge that he had transgressed against Judaism.

**I am accused** (present tense)(1458)(**egkaleo** from **en** = in + **kaleo** = to call) means to call in,. It was a legal technical term meaning to bring charges against, institute proceedings against someone.

**Egkaleo** in NT - Acts 19:38; Acts 19:40; Acts 23:28; Acts 23:29; Acts 26:2; Acts 26:7; Rom. 8:33

**I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that I am about to make my defense before you today**- **Spurgeon** writes "With what courtesy does he speak! Paul is bold; but see how he is all things to all men! And he begins an address for his life with great adroitness and skill; teaching us that we are to use all the courtesies of life to those to whom they belong, and never to cause needless irritation. There is enough offence in the Cross of itself, without our being offensive when uplifting it.....It is always well to try to be on good terms with the person whom you wish to impress with the truth of the gospel. Paul therefore did not begin bluntly, as some foolish people would have done, but he addressed the king most courteously and respectfully. I think I see the little man, as he doubtless was. Paul the man with feeble eyes, and with no great bodily presence to command attention, yet bravely stretching out his hand, and, like a preacher, thus addressing Herod Agrippa."

**Gilbrant** - Paul made no criticism of the king's empty display, nor did he refer to the jewelry of Bernice or her unsavory reputation. He was intent not on defending himself but his Master. The cause of Christ was always more important to him than his own cause. Thus, with all courtesy and deep earnestness he began his defense. (Ibid)

**Consider** (2233) (**hegeomai** from **ágo** = to lead) primarily signifies to lead then, consider (Heb 11:26; 2Pe 3:15) To think about and come to a conclusion. It was a mathematical term. The idea here is of making a decision after weighing the facts and/or circumstances.

**Make...defense** (626)(**apologeomai** from **apo** = from + **logos** = speech) literally means, "to talk one's self off from" and thus to speak in one's own defense, defend oneself. BDAG - "to speak in one's own defense against charges presumed to be false," **Apologia** was a technical word used in the Greek law courts and was used of an attorney who talked his client off from a charge preferred against him. In short it refers to a speech given in defense.

The English word "**apologetics**" comes from the Gr. word here translated "defense." Our English word **apology** originally did not mean "to say I am sorry" but actually referred to "a defense presented in court." **Apologetics** is the branch of theology that deals with the defense of the faith. Every Christian should be able to give a reasoned defense of his hope in Christ, especially in hopeless situations. A crisis creates the opportunity for witness when a believer behaves with faith and hope, because the unbelievers will then sit up and take notice.

**See Related Resources at Gotquestions:**

- [What is Christian apologetics?](#)
- [Does the Bible call Christians to defend the faith / argue for the faith?](#)
- [What is classical apologetics?;](#)
- [What is an apologist?;](#)
- [What is evidential apologetics?](#)
- [What is presuppositional apologetics?](#)
- [Questions about Apologetics and Worldview](#)

**Apologeomai** - 10x in 10v - Usage: defend(1), defending(2), make a defense(1), make...defense(3), said in...defense(1), saying in...defense(1), speak in...defense(1). Only used twice in the Septuagint - Jer 12:1, Jer 31:6.

Luke 12:11 "When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say;

Luke 21:14 "So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves;

Acts 19:33 Some of the crowd concluded it was Alexander, since the Jews had put him forward; and having motioned with his hand, Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly.

Acts 24:10 When the governor had nodded for him to speak, Paul responded: "Knowing that for many years you have been a judge to this nation, I cheerfully make my defense,

Acts 25:8 while Paul said in his own defense, "I have committed no offense either against the Law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar."

Acts 26:1 Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and proceeded to make his defense:

Acts 26:2 "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;

Acts 26:24 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."

Romans 2:15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,

2 Corinthians 12:19 All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. Actually, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and all for your upbuilding, beloved.

**Acts 26:3 especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among *the* Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.**

BGT Acts 26:3 μ λιστα γν στην ντα σε π ντων τ ν κατ ουδα ους θ ν τε κα ζητημ των, δι δ ομαι μακροθ μως κο σα μου.

NET Acts 26:3 because you are especially familiar with all the customs and controversial issues of the Jews. Therefore I ask you to listen to me patiently.

GNT Acts 26:3 μ λιστα γν στην ντα σε π ντων τ ν κατ ουδα ους θ ν τε κα ζητημ των, δι δ ομαι μακροθ μως κο σα μου.

NLT Acts 26:3 for I know you are an expert on all Jewish customs and controversies. Now please listen to me patiently!

KJV Acts 26:3 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.

ESV Acts 26:3 especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

CSB Acts 26:3 especially since you are an expert in all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

NIV Acts 26:3 and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

NKJ Acts 26:3 "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.

NRS Acts 26:3 because you are especially familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews; therefore I beg of you to listen to me patiently.

YLT Acts 26:3 especially knowing thee to be acquainted with all things -- both customs and questions -- among Jews; wherefore, I beseech thee, patiently to hear me.

NAB Acts 26:3 especially since you are an expert in all the Jewish customs and controversies. And therefore I beg you to listen patiently.

NJB Acts 26:3 the more so because you are an expert in matters of custom and controversy among the Jews. So I beg you to listen to me patiently.

GWN Acts 26:3 I say this since you are especially familiar with every custom and controversy in Judaism. So I ask you to listen patiently to me.

BBE Acts 26:3 The more so, because you are expert in all questions to do with the Jews and their ways: so I make my request to you to give me a hearing to the end.

- **because.** Acts 26:26; Acts 6:14; 21:21; 24:10; 25:19, 20, 26; 28:17. Dt 17:18. 1 Co. 13:2.
- **therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently** Acts 24:4.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

### Paul Presents His Testimony to Agrippa - Acts 26:1-21

- Acts 26:1-3 His Congeniality
- Acts 26:4-5 His Character
- Acts 26:6-8 His Confidence
- Acts 26:9-11 His Cruelty
- Acts 26:12-15 His Conversion
- Acts 26:16-18 His Commission
- Acts 26:19-21 His Compliance

## PAUL EXPLAINS WHY HE CONSIDERED HIMSELF FORTUNATE

Paul is not flattering like Tertullus did (Acts 24:2-4+) but is sincere - he is thankful that Agrippa is familiar with aspects of the Jewish religion.

**Jack Arnold** - Paul was cool, calm and collected as he was surrounded by all these prominent personages. He was the commanding figure in this banquet and he had commanding control of the whole situation. Paul became the center of attention and he conducted himself like a gentleman. Paul was delighted to give his testimony before Agrippa for Agrippa understood Mosaic Law and Jewish religious customs. Notice how polite, courteous and congenial Paul was as he spoke directly to the king. Paul did not argue with Agrippa. He did not use caustic language. He did not raise his voice. He did not start out by telling Agrippa he was a sinner in need of Christ and destined for hell if he did not repent and turn to Christ. Paul merely gave his testimony, giving an intelligent, logical and magnificent witness to King Agrippa. ([Sermon](#))

**Butler** quips that "Paul did not slobber with sycophantic statements to Agrippa but honored Agrippa properly by stating that Agrippa had much knowledge regarding the subject upon which Paul was being tried." (Analytical Bible Expositor – Acts)

**Longenecker** - "This was just the kind of situation Paul had longed for during two bleak years in prison-viz., a knowledgeable judge and a not inherently antagonistic audience before whom he could not only make his defense but also proclaim his message."

**Epecially because you are an expert...therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently** - "since you are outstandingly familiar" Later Paul declares that Agrippa knew about the events that had occurred concerning Jesus (Acts 26:26+) and that he believed the Old Testament prophets (Acts 26:27+). In short Paul appealed to this "good" quality of Agrippa to open the door so that Agrippa might listen carefully and receive the Gospel Paul was about to explain. Yes he was giving a defense but as he did he gave the Gospel and in so doing Agrippa (and all present that fateful day) became the defendants! What Paul did on that day is what believers are to do as they seek to imitate Paul (1 Cor 11:1+).

**Sanctify** ([aorist imperative](#) = "Just Do It!) Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense ([apologia](#)) to everyone who asks you to give an account for the [hope](#) (cf Paul speaking of "hope" in the following verses) that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; (1 Peter 3:15+)

**J Vernon McGee** - Paul is now speaking to a man who understands what he is talking about. Agrippa is an intelligent man, he knows the Mosaic Law, and he understands the Jewish background. Paul really rejoices in this opportunity to speak to such an instructed man who will understand the true nature of the case. Paul likewise is well instructed in the Mosaic Law, but Paul has met Christ. Now the Law has a new meaning for him. The soul of Paul is flooded with a new light. Now he sees that Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness (Ro 10:4+). Now he knows that God has supplied that (perfect righteousness) which He had demanded. He knows that God is good and that through Christ God is gracious. Paul wants King Agrippa to know this. There is a consummate passion filling the soul of the apostle as he speaks. I think this is his masterpiece. His message on Mars' Hill ([Areopagus](#) - Acts 17:22+) is great, but it does not compare at all to this message. Although there were probably several hundred people present to hear this message, Paul is speaking to only one man, King Agrippa. Paul is trying to win this man for Christ.

In Paul's approach he is conducting himself with wisdom toward outsiders even as he commanded the saints at Colossae in Col 4:5, 6-[note](#). We all do well to emulate his pattern!

**Expert** (only NT use)(1109)(**gnostes** from [ginosko](#) = to know by experience) means one who knows, one thoroughly acquainted

with or practiced in something, one who is knowledgeable about something. **Vine** adds "a [connoisseur](#)." (an expert able to appreciate a field; especially in the fine arts)

Gnostes in the Septuagint - 1 Sam. 28:3; 1 Sam. 28:9; 2 Ki. 21:6; 2 Chr. 35:19; Acts 26:3

**Robertson** - Agrippa was qualified to give Paul an understanding and a sympathetic hearing. Paul understands perfectly the grandstand play of the whole performance, but he refused to be silent and chose to use this opportunity, slim as it seemed, to get a fresh hearing for his own case and to present the claims of Christ to this influential man. His address is a masterpiece of noble apologetic.

**Gilbrant** - Agrippa's father was zealous for the Jewish law up to almost the end of his life. He was concerned about Jewish customs and the temple. Because Agrippa himself was now the Roman official in charge of the temple, he must have learned a great deal from his own experiences as well as from his father's. He would know too how controversial many of the questions were that arose among the Jews and how the customs varied among the different sects such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. (The Complete Biblical Library – Acts)

**Customs** (1485)(**ethos** from **etho** = to be used, to be accustomed) refers to a usual or customary manner of behavior, habit, pattern of behavior which is more or less fixed by tradition or practice. It may be established by law or otherwise generally sanctioned by the society.

**The Jews** - It is not "the Jews". The article "**the**" is added by NAS translators and is not a good addition. The absence of the definite article ("the") in Greek conveys the more accurate sense of "some Jews." If Paul had said "the Jews" this would have indicted the entire nation of Israel, which clearly was not his intent.

**Jews** (2453) (**Ioudaios** ultimately derived from Hebrew Yehudi = a member of the tribe of Judah) is an adjective refers to one who belongs to the Jewish race with focus on adherence to Mosaic tradition (Acts 10:28, 22:3, 21:39). A Jew in respect to race or religion (as opposed to Gentiles). In the plural, it means the Jews, the people of ancient Palestine.

**Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently** - A respectful way to address the king.

**I beg** (beseech, request) (1189)(**deomai** from **deo** = to bind) means to ask for something with the sense of pleading, beseeching or begging.

**Listen to me patiently** - Yes, Paul was "on trial" (although they had already decided to send him to Caesar), but in another sense (similar to Jesus' appearance before Pilate) it was really Agrippa who was on trial for his eternal destiny was at stake. Thus Paul begs him to listen, this word for listen not simply referring to hearing but hearing with attention, hearing so as to respond to what is heard, to listen or pay attention to a person with resulting conformity to what is advised or commanded. I would submit that Paul was not only defending himself but was prosecuting Agrippa's soul! I am reminded of his words to the Church at Corinth...

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; **we beg (same verb** he uses here in Acts 26:3 - (**deomai**) **you on behalf of Christ**, be reconciled to God. (2 Cor 5:20-note)

**Patiently** (only NT use)(3116) (**makrothumos** from **makros** = long, distant, far off, large + **thumos** = temper, **passion**, emotion or **thumomai** = to be furious or burn with intense anger) is literally long-tempered (not "short tempered"), a long holding out of the mind before it gives room to action or passion. See noun [makrothumia](#) and verb [makrothumeo](#). Makrothumos is used repeatedly in the Septuagint to describe the wonderful attribute of God as "slow to anger," and is used in Proverbs as a description of the godly man (see below).

**BDAG on makrothumos** - pertaining to being self-controlled in the face of provocation = patient, forbearing, tolerant, even-tempered. (a) of human beings (Pr 14:29; 15:18; 16:32 al.) (b.) of God (Ex 34:6; Num 14:18; 2 Esdr 19:17 al.)

**Gilbrant on makrothumos** - An adverbial form, makrothumōs occurs only one time in the Greek New Testament (Acts 26:3). It does not appear in the adverbial form in the Septuagint although the adjective form makrothumos occurs often. *Liddell-Scott* does not cite a single occurrence of the word in classical Greek, nor does *Moulton-Milligan* cite any occurrence in the papyri literature. For insight into the meaning of the adverb makrothumōs one may look at the kindred verb [makrothumeo](#) or the adjective form makrothumos. Both the verb and adjective support the basic concept that makrothumōs describes actions that are "patient, forbearing, slow to anger." In Acts 26:3 Paul asked Agrippa that he be patient (makrothumōs) in hearing him and that he reserve judgment. Above all Paul was concerned that Agrippa allow him ample time to present what Agrippa needed to know. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Makrothumos** in the **Septuagint** - slow to anger

Exod. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 7:11; Ps. 86:15; Ps. 103:8; Ps. 145:8; Prov. 14:29; Prov. 15:18; Prov. 16:32; Prov. 17:27; Eccl. 7:8; Dan. 4:27; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2; Nah. 1:3

**Slow to anger** is a divine attribute (one which we all are eternally grateful for!). The Septuagint repeatedly uses the word *makrothumos*

Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, **slow to anger** (*makrothumos*) , and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; (Ex 34:6)

But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, **Slow to anger** (*makrothumos*) and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. (Ps 86:15)

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, **Slow to anger** (*makrothumos*) and abounding in lovingkindness. (Ps 103:8)

The LORD is gracious and merciful; **Slow to anger** (*makrothumos*) and great in lovingkindness. (Ps 145:8)

And rend your heart and not your garments." Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, **slow to anger** (*makrothumos*), abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil. (Joel 2:13+)

God calls us (in essence) to "**imitate** ([present imperative](#)) Him" (Eph 5:1+) and to exercise Spirit enabled (Gal 5:22+) **long-suffering** (slowness to anger) in the face of provocation and unjust treatment.

He who is **slow to anger** (*makrothumos*) has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly. (Pr 14:29)

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger **slow to anger** (*makrothumos*) calms a dispute. (Pr 15:18)

He who is **slow to anger** (*makrothumos*) is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city. (Pr 16:32)

He who restrains his words has knowledge, And he who has a cool spirit (*makrothumos*) is a man of understanding. (Pr 17:27)

**Acts 26:4 "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;**

Amplified - [Especially] because you are so fully *and* unusually conversant with all the Jewish customs and controversies; therefore, I beg you to hear me patiently.

BGT Acts 26:4 Τ ν μ ν ο ν β ω σ ν μου [τ ν] κ νε τητος τ ν π ρ χ ς γενομ νην ν τ θνει μου ν τε εροσολ μοις σασι π ντες [ο ] ουδα οι

NET Acts 26:4 Now all the Jews know the way I lived from my youth, spending my life from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem.

GNT Acts 26:4 Τ ν μ ν ο ν β ω σ ν μου [τ ν] κ νε τητος τ ν π ρ χ ς γενομ νην ν τ θνει μου ν τε εροσολ μοις σασι π ντες [ο ] ουδα οι

NLT Acts 26:4 "As the Jewish leaders are well aware, I was given a thorough Jewish training from my earliest childhood among my own people and in Jerusalem.

KJV Acts 26:4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;

ESV Acts 26:4 "My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews.

CSB Acts 26:4 "All the Jews know my way of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem.

NIV Acts 26:4 "The Jews all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem.



NKJ Acts 26:4 "My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know.

NRS Acts 26:4 "All the Jews know my way of life from my youth, a life spent from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem.

YLT Acts 26:4 'The manner of my life then, indeed, from youth -- which from the beginning was among my nation, in Jerusalem -- know do all the Jews,

NAB Acts 26:4 My manner of living from my youth, a life spent from the beginning among my people and in Jerusalem, all (the) Jews know.

NJB Acts 26:4 'My manner of life from my youth, a life spent from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem, is common knowledge among the Jews.

GWN Acts 26:4 "All the Jews know how I lived the earliest days of my youth with my own people and in Jerusalem.

BBE Acts 26:4 All the Jews have knowledge of my way of life from my early years, as it was from the start among my nation, and at Jerusalem;

- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

### **Paul Presents His Testimony to Agrippa - Acts 26:1-21**

- Acts 26:1-3 His Congeniality
- Acts 26:4-5 His Character
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- Acts 26:19-21 His Compliance

## **SAUL'S REPUTATION WAS WELL-KNOWN**

**All Jews know my manner of life from my youth up** - Paul did not need to go into great detail. As **A T Robertson** says "Paul's early life in Tarsus and Jerusalem was an open book to all Jews." Even his Jewish accusers knew the kind of zealous, dedicated Jewish life he had lived. And so as Paul begins his testimony of his conversion, he first describes what he was like before he met Jesus. This "before-after" motif is always a good pattern for believers to emulate when we give our testimony of God's grace, but we need to take care not to go into graphic detail of sins we committed while we lived in the kingdom of darkness. I have heard some testimonies that place more emphasis on the person's time in the darkness, to the point that I even felt defiled after they concluded their account. It is best to keep our pre-conversion life and lifestyle as brief as possible, because that is who we once were and it pales in comparison to who we now are in Christ by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9+).

**Manner of life** ([biosis](#)) is used only here and refers to how one spends his earthly life or how one lives.

**Which from the beginning** ([arche](#)) **was spent among my own nation and at Jerusalem** - Paul is testifying that he was Jewish to the core! From the beginning would refer to his birth in [Tarsus](#) the capital of the [Roman province of Cilicia](#). And then he describes his time in Jerusalem (exactly what years this time encompasses is not certain). It is interesting that Paul does not mention his Roman citizenship. Paul had given a similar pre-conversion account before the Jews in Jerusalem who "were seeking to kill him" even "beating" him (Acts 21:31-32+) ...

Acts 22:3+ "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under [Gamaliel](#), strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.

**NET Note** - Gamaliel was a famous Jewish scholar and teacher mentioned here in Acts 5:34+ and in Acts 22:3. He had a grandson of the same name and is referred to as "Gamaliel the Elder" to avoid confusion. He is quoted a number of times in the Mishnah, was given the highest possible title for Jewish teachers, Rabba (cf. John 20:16), and was highly regarded in later rabbinic tradition.

**At Jerusalem** - **Gilbrant** writes that Saul (Paul) "was sent early to Jerusalem to be educated and taught a trade. His teacher,

[Gamaliel](#), was one of the most distinguished rabbis of that time and was a grandson of the famous Hillel who is still revered by orthodox Jews. At his feet the young Paul (then called by his Hebrew name, Saul) learned the Old Testament and all the rabbinical traditions and interpretations." (CBC)

**Acts 26:5 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.**

BGT Acts 26:5 προγιν σκοντ ς με νωθεν, ν θ λωσι μαρτυρε ν, τι κατ τ ν κριβεστ την α ρειν τ ς μετ ρας θρησκε ας ζησα Φαρισα ος.

NET Acts 26:5 They know, because they have known me from time past, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee.

GNT Acts 26:5 προγιν σκοντ ς με νωθεν, ν θ λωσι μαρτυρε ν, τι κατ τ ν κριβεστ την α ρειν τ ς μετ ρας θρησκε ας ζησα Φαρισα ος.

NLT Acts 26:5 If they would admit it, they know that I have been a member of the Pharisees, the strictest sect of our religion.

KJV Acts 26:5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

ESV Acts 26:5 They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee.

CSB Acts 26:5 They had previously known me for quite some time, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I lived as a Pharisee.

NIV Acts 26:5 They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee.

NKJ Acts 26:5 "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.

NRS Acts 26:5 They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I have belonged to the strictest sect of our religion and lived as a Pharisee.

YLT Acts 26:5 knowing me before from the first, (if they may be willing to testify,) that after the most exact sect of our worship, I lived a Pharisee;

NAB Acts 26:5 They have known about me from the start, if they are willing to testify, that I have lived my life as a Pharisee, the strictest party of our religion.

NJB Acts 26:5 They have known me for a long time and could testify, if they would, that I followed the strictest party in our religion and lived as a Pharisee.

GWN Acts 26:5 They've known me for a long time and can testify, if they're willing, that I followed the strictest party of our religion. They know that I lived my life as a Pharisee.

BBE Acts 26:5 And they are able to say, if they would give witness, that I was living as a Pharisee, in that division of our religion which is most regular in the keeping of the law.

- **if they are willing to testify** Acts 22:5.
- **that I lived as a Pharisee.** Acts 23:6. Phil 3:5, 6.
- **the strictest sect** Acts 24:5, 14.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### **Paul Presents His Testimony to Agrippa - Acts 26:1-21**

- Acts 26:1-3 His Congeniality
- Acts 26:4-5 His Character
- Acts 26:6-8 His Confidence

- Acts 26:9-11 His Cruelty
- Acts 26:12-15 His Conversion
- Acts 26:16-18 His Commission
- Acts 26:19-21 His Compliance

## SAUL'S REPUTATION CONTINUED

**Since they have known about me for a long time** - Paul repeats what he had said in Acts 26:4 "So then, all Jews know my manner of life."

**Known** (previously known)(4267) (**proginosko** from **pró** = before + **ginosko** = know) literally means to know about something prior to some temporal reference point. How long? Luke does not say but possibly from the beginning of Paul's public education in Jerusalem. The point is Paul was well-known.

**If they are willing to testify** - "A neat turning of the tables on the distinguished audience about Paul's Jerusalem reputation before his conversion." (Robertson)

Gilbrant - "If those who knew Paul from the beginning (of his stay in Jerusalem) would testify (bear witness), they would have to say Paul lived as a Pharisee, following the teachings of the strictest of the Jewish sects."

**Testify** (be a witness) (3140)(**martureo**) means to bear witness by stating facts based on firsthand knowledge of Paul's life and how he was a chief persecutor of Christians.

**Longenecker** comments that "It was not in spite of his Jewish heritage but because of it, Paul insisted, that he believed and proclaimed what he did. So he began the body of his address by drawing together his Pharisaic background and his Christian commitment, arguing that the Jewish hope and the Christian message are inseparably related. (Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 9: John and Acts)

**That I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion**- Paul is saying he was as Jewish as anyone could be, being a member of the sect that held firmly to the Law of Moses. He used his membership as a Pharisee to disrupt the Sanhedrin

But perceiving that one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council,  
**"Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!"**  
 As he said this, there occurred a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. (Acts 23:6, 7+).

Paul describes his pre-conversion life in Philippians 3:5; 6+ explaining that he was

"circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church (i.e., CHRISTIANITY); as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless."

Paul stressed his zeal not to brag, but to show how improbable it was that he would be converted to Christianity. His zeal for the Law of Moses makes his conversion by grace all the more striking to Agrippa and all who heard his testimony and in fact they were hearing a miracle.

**Sect** (139)(**hairesis** from **haireo** = to choose, elect, prefer; only in the middle voice = to take for oneself; see word study of **hairetikos**) denotes a choosing or a choice. It came to mean an opinion chosen or a tenet (a principle, belief, or doctrine generally held to be true) and then came to refer to a sect, party or faction that held tenets distinctive to it.

**Religion** (2356)(**threskeia** from **threskos** = religious, devout Jas 1:26+) means worship or religious service (as in Col 2:18) and can refer to a system of external observances as in (Acts 26:5). **Threskeia** in expresses the worship of God, especially in religious service. This noun denotes appropriate beliefs and devout practice of obligations relating to supernatural persons and powers [LN]. It is the expression of devotion to transcendent beings, especially as it expresses itself in cultic rites [BDAG]. **Robertson** adds **threskeia** was "common in the papyri and inscriptions (Moulton and Milligan's *Vocabulary*) for reverent worship, not mere external ritual.

**Josephus** described the **Pharisees** as "a certain sect of the Jews that appear more religious than others, and seem to interpret the laws more accurately" ( Wars 1.5.2).

**NET Note** - A Pharisee was a member of one of the most important and influential religious and political parties of Judaism in the

time of Jesus. There were more Pharisees than Sadducees (according to Josephus, Ant. 17.2.4 [17.42] there were more than 6,000 Pharisees at about this time). Pharisees differed with Sadducees on certain doctrines and patterns of behavior. The Pharisees were strict and zealous adherents to the laws of the OT and to numerous additional traditions such as angels and bodily resurrection.

**Pharisee** - From perishin Aramaic, perashim , "separated." See [dictionary article on Pharisees](#) or articles below

- American Tract Society [Pharisees](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Pharisees](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Pharisees](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Pharisees](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Pharisees](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Pharisees](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Pharisees](#) [Pharisees \(2\)](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Pharisees](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Pharisees](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Pharisees](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Pharisees](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Pharisee](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Pharisees](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Pharisees](#)

#### Acts 26:6 "And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers;

BGT Acts 26:6 καὶ νῦν ἐπὶ ληϊστῆς τοῦ πατρὸς μου παγγέλως γενομένης πρὸ θεοῦ στήκαμι κρινόμενος,

NET Acts 26:6 And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors,

GNT Acts 26:6 καὶ νῦν ἐπὶ ληϊστῆς τοῦ πατρὸς μου παγγέλως γενομένης πρὸ θεοῦ στήκαμι κρινόμενος,

NLT Acts 26:6 Now I am on trial because of my hope in the fulfillment of God's promise made to our ancestors.

KJV Acts 26:6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:

ESV Acts 26:6 And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers,

CSB Acts 26:6 And now I stand on trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers,

NIV Acts 26:6 And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today.

NKJ Acts 26:6 "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers.

NRS Acts 26:6 And now I stand here on trial on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors,

YLT Acts 26:6 and now for the hope of the promise made to the fathers by God, I have stood judged,

NAB Acts 26:6 But now I am standing trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors.

NJB Acts 26:6 And now it is for my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors that I am on trial,

GWN Acts 26:6 "I'm on trial now because I expect God to keep the promise that he made to our ancestors.

BBE Acts 26:6 And now I am here to be judged because of the hope given by God's word to our fathers;

- **am.** Acts 26:8; Acts 23:6; 24:15, 21; 28:20.
- **the promise.** Acts 3:24; Acts 13:32, 33. Ge. 3:15; 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 49:10. Dt 18:15. 2 Sa. 7:12, 13. Job 19:25–27. Ps 2:6–12. 40:6–8; 98:2; 110:1–4; 132:11, 17. Isa 4:2; 7:14; 9:6, 7; 11:1–5; 40:9–11; 42:1–4; 53:10–12; 61:1–3. Jer 23:5, 6; 33:14–17. Ezek 17:22–24; 21:27; 34:23–25; 37:24. Da. 2:34, 35, 44, 45; 7:13, 14; 9:24–26. Ho. 3:5. Joel. 2:32. Am. 9:11, 12. Ob. 21. Micah 5:2; 7:20. Zep. 3:14–17. Zech 2:10, 11; 6:12; 9:9; 13:1, 7. Mal. 3:1; 4:2. Lu. 1:69, 70. Ro. 15:8. Gal 3:17, 18; 4:4. Titus 2:13. 1 Pe. 1:11, 12.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes

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- Acts 26:19-21 His Compliance

## PAUL EMPHASIZES THE HOPE OF GOD'S PROMISE

Paul had taken a similar approach in his defense before Felix:

Acts 24:14–15+ “But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets; **having a hope in God**, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

**Jack Arnold** - Paul then pointed out to Agrippa that he believed nothing now that he did not believe when he was a dedicated Jewish Pharisee. He believed in the resurrection then and he believed it now. The promises of the Old Testament guaranteed a resurrection from the dead (Da 12:2+, et al) and, for Paul, this truth had been solidified by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, Paul was in prison because he believed in the resurrection like all good Jews believed, but he knew the resurrection was a fact because he had personally met the resurrected Christ. The Jews did not believe that Christ was resurrected, for if He was, then He would have to be the Messiah, the God-Man, the Savior spoken of in the Old Testament. This was the rub with these Jews. Paul pointed out that a belief in the resurrection from the dead was very logical if there is a God. After all, He who created the universe and the world can certainly raise a man from the dead. The real issue is not resurrection, nor even the resurrection of Jesus, but a basic belief in God who can do the supernatural. Paul had great confidence in the God of Scripture, the promises of the Old Testament and the resurrection of the dead. ([Sermon](#))

**Constable** summarizes this section - The essence of the controversy surrounding Paul's ministry and teaching, he explained, was the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel, namely salvation through a Messiah. This promise included personal spiritual salvation as well as national deliverance and blessing that the Hebrew prophets had predicted (**ED**: [SEE EXAMPLE OF A PROPHECY BELOW](#)). The agent of this salvation would be a Savior whom God would anoint and who would rise from the dead. Paul's conclusions concerning that Savior were the basis for the Jews' antagonism against him. ([Acts 26 Commentary](#))

**Nelson Study Bible** - Paul was not being judged because he had done something wrong. He had not turned against his own Jewish heritage. Instead he fervently believed in the promises God had made to the nation of Israel: the promise of a coming Messiah and the reestablishment of the kingdom of God. Paul did not reject the hope of salvation for Israel. Instead he saw that hope fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The fact that Jesus had been raised from the dead confirmed to Paul that all believers would be raised from the dead to enjoy the blessings of the promised kingdom of God.

**And now I am standing trial** - **Fruchtenbaum** points out that " the expression **And now** points to a sharp contrast between his youth and his present state."

**For the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers**- **The promise** refers to the promise of the Messiah and the good news associated with His appearing that righteousness is available to all who believe. **Larkin** adds the "point at issue is the hope for messianic end-time salvation."

Luke repeatedly alludes to the **hope of Israel** and that it was because of his belief in that hope that he was on trial

Acts 23:6+ But perceiving that one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council, “Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for **the hope and resurrection of the dead!**”

Acts 24:15+ **having a hope in God**, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be **a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked**.

Acts 28:20+ "For this reason, therefore, I requested to see you and to speak with you, for I am wearing this chain for the sake of **the hope of Israel**."

**Fruchtenbaum** - The phrase the **hope of the promise** refers to the Messianic Hope in Acts 13:32, which was made to our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Messianic Hope was the ideal of Pharisaism.

**MacArthur** explains that **the hope of the promise** "was the coming of the Messiah and His kingdom (cf. Acts 1:6+; Acts 3:22–24+; Acts 13:23–33+; Gal. 3:17–18; 4:4; Titus 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:11–12) and, specifically, the resurrection connected with His coming. It was that **promise** that was made by God throughout the Old Testament: Messiah would come to take away sin and establish His kingdom of righteousness. (Ibid)

The Old Testament prophets had prophesied of this **hope** of the coming Messianic Kingdom. For example, the prophet Isaiah wrote...

The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain (WHAT MOUNTAIN? MOUNT ZION, SITE OF THE HOLY CITY); A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, And refined, aged wine. 7 And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, Even the veil which is stretched over all nations. 8 He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.

9 And it will be said in that day (WHAT DAY? THE DAY MESSIAH RETURNS TO DELIVER ISRAEL - the [believing Jewish remnant](#) - read Zechariah 12:10-14+, Zech 13:1+, Zech 13:8-9+, Ro 11:26-27+) "**Behold, this is our God for Whom we have waited** (Heb = [qavah](#); [Lxx](#) = [elpizo](#) = **HOPED FOR**) **that He might save us** ([Lxx](#) = [soteria](#) = deliverance, salvation, see Lk 1:69-75+). This is the LORD for whom we have waited; Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation."

10 For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain, And Moab will be trodden down in his place As straw is trodden down in the water of a manure pile. 11 And he will spread out his hands in the middle of it As a swimmer spreads out his hands to swim, But the Lord will lay low his pride together with the trickery of his hands. 12 The unassailable fortifications of your walls He will bring down, Lay low and cast to the ground, even to the dust. (Isaiah 25:6-12)

**John Martin** explains that Isaiah 25 "is a praise psalm extolling the Lord's deliverance of His people. Soon after God in His judgment will wipe out sinful people (Isaiah 24:1-23) the Messiah's glorious kingdom will begin. In poetry Isaiah described the praise that will be ascribed to the Lord in the [Millennium](#) for His marvelous work." (The Bible Knowledge Commentary)

#### Related Resources:

- [Messiah Son of David](#)
- [Messianic Prophecies](#)
- [Millennial Reign of Christ](#)
- [Our Deliverer is Coming](#)
- [Psalm 22:6-I Am a Worm](#)
- [The Messiah - The Anointed One](#)
- [The Resurrection of Christ](#)

**Hope** (1680) see note below on [elpis](#). Not a hope so but a hope sure. An assurance that God would keep His OT prophetic promises to Israel.

**The promise** - This refers to the Promised Messiah (e.g., read Acts 3:22, 23, 24), to His coming and His Messianic Kingdom. This promise was inherent in the covenant promise God made to **our fathers** Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Regarding the hope of the **Promised Messiah** Luke records

Moses said, 'THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you. 23 'And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' 24 "And likewise, **all the prophets** who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days (THIS HOPE WAS COMMON KNOWLEDGE TO THE JEWS WHO READ THEIR PROPHETS). (Acts 3:22-24+)



Regarding the hope of the **Messianic Kingdom** the disciples' questioned Jesus indicating they cherished and longed for the fulfillment of this hope. Luke records...

So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, '**Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?**'" (Acts 1:6+)

**Promise** (1860) ([epaggelia/epangelia](#) from **epí** = intensifies + **aggéllō** = tell, declare) literally means to "tell at or upon" and originally referred to an announcement or declaration (especially of a favorable message). In other words the first sense of **epaggelia** is that of a . declaration to do something which came to be associated with the implication of obligation to carry out what is stated and thus the meaning of a promise, pledge or offer. In Scripture, **epaggelia** refers primarily to God's pronouncements that provide assurance of what He intends to do.

Uses of [epaggelia/epangelia](#) by Luke other than Acts 26:6 - note the first 3 uses refer to the promise of the Holy Spirit (who had been promised in the OT, e.g., see Joel 2:28-29+, Zech 12:10+, Isaiah 32:15, Isaiah 44:3, Ezek 36:27+, Ezek 39:29+ and of course the **promise** of the Holy Spirit could not be given until Jesus had been glorified in Jn 7:37-39<sup>+</sup>, which implied that he had to be crucified and resurrected).

Luke 24:49 "And behold, I am sending forth the **promise** of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Acts 1:4+ Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had **promised**, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me;

Acts 2:33+ "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

Acts 2:39+ "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

Acts 7:17+ "But as the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt,

Acts 13:23+ "From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus,

Acts 13:32+ "And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers,

Acts 23:21+ "So do not listen to them, for more than forty of them are lying in wait for him who have bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they slay him; and now they are ready and waiting for the promise from you."

Compare Peter's reference in his sermon to the Jews in Jerusalem...

"It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED.' (Acts 3:25+)

**Comment** - Messiah was the ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant and its blessings (Gal 3:16-note), which are still available to the Jews.

#### **God's covenant promise to Abraham:**

Gen 12:3<sup>+</sup> And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Gen 17:19 But God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

Gen 22:18 "And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

#### **God's covenant promise to Abraham's son Isaac:**

Gen 26:4 "And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;

#### **God's covenant promise to Isaac's son Jacob**

Gen 28:14 "Your descendants shall also be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

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## A Witness Of Hope Read: Acts 26:1-8,24-32

Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you. —1 Peter 3:15

As a child growing up in the former Soviet Union, Nickolas was the only one in his school who refused to join the political group for young people. Because of his faith in God, he was singled out for ridicule, given bad grades he did not deserve, and denied a recommendation to the university. Despite the opposition, he persisted, and in later years he led some of his persecutors to trust in Jesus Christ. Now he is the pastor of a thriving church in Belarus.

The apostle Paul also suffered persecution. His faith landed him in the court of King Agrippa, and he had opportunity to tell how God had changed his life. He testified, “**Now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers**” (Acts 26:6). His witness to the king about salvation in Christ and the hope of resurrection was clear and convicting.

When we live out our faith in Christ, we're bound to attract the attention of others and may even face persecution. We know our sins are forgiven, and we look forward to being with Jesus forever in heaven. We want to share our faith with others, and some people will want to know the reason for our hope (1 Peter 3:15). When questions come, let's be ready to give a witness. By David Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When witnessing, if people ask,

"How do you know it's true?"

Remember that they can't deny

What Christ has done for you.

—Sper

Our witness for Christ is the light for a world in darkness.

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### The Messianic Promise - R. Tuck - Acts 26:6

And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God, to our fathers:

The words of this verse include the whole expectation of a Divine kingdom, of which the Christ was to be the Head, as well as the specific belief in a resurrection of the dead. It is said of the early revelations of God, by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners" (Revised Version). And the presentation of Messiah in the Old Testament Scriptures has been likened to the painting of a great picture, on which, during the many ages, many hands have worked. At first we have but the barest outline figure, drawn by God himself in the promise to our first parents. Then patriarch, lawgiver, judge, king, poet, and prophet in their turn become artist-painters, and help to fill in the wondrous outline, until in the later days of Isaiah the Messiah stands forth full and clear before us, the suffering, conquering King. Dealing with the scriptural promise of Messiah, the Prince and Savior, we note -

I. THAT IT WAS EARLY GIVEN. In the world's very morning. In the first hem's of the world's sin and woe. Almost before the shadow of man's sin could fall upon his life, God sent forth this great ray of hope. (cp Ge 3:15)

II. THAT IT WAS OFTEN RENEWED. For every generation; for every new set of circumstances. In ever-varied forms. With a gracious advancing clearness and fullness. The actual instances provide the illustrations. For lists of them, see appendices to modern Bibles.

III. THAT IT WAS STRANGELY MISCONCEIVED. Because men would not take the Messianic figure as a whole, but chose the parts of it which they preferred. And because men did not take the revelation in its simplicity, but read it in the light of their circumstances, and especially of their temporal necessities. So a nation whose liberty had been taken from them only saw in Messianic promise a liberator, a Judas Maccabeus, a triumphing prince, after the pattern indicated by Daniel. Messiah is for men, not for Jews only, for sinners, and not for an enslaved nation only.

**Acts 26:7 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.**

Amplified - Which hope [of the Messiah and the resurrection] our twelve tribes confidently expect to realize as they fervently worship [without ceasing] night and day. And for that hope, O king, I am accused by Jews and considered a criminal!

BGT Acts 26:7 ες ν τ δωδεκ φυλον μ ν ν κτενε ν κτα κα μ ραν λατρε ον λιπ ζει καταντ σαι, περ ς λιπ δορ γκαλο μαι π ουδα ων, βασιλε .

NET Acts 26:7 a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain as they earnestly serve God night and day. Concerning this hope the Jews are accusing me, Your Majesty!

GNT Acts 26:7 ες ν τ δωδεκ φυλον μ ν ν κτενε ν κτα κα μ ραν λατρε ον λιπ ζει καταντ σαι, περ ς λιπ δορ γκαλο μαι π ουδα ων, βασιλε .

NLT Acts 26:7 In fact, that is why the twelve tribes of Israel zealously worship God night and day, and they share the same hope I have. Yet, Your Majesty, they accuse me for having this hope!

KJV Acts 26:7 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.

ESV Acts 26:7 to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king!

CSB Acts 26:7 the promise our 12 tribes hope to attain as they earnestly serve Him night and day. King Agrippa, I am being accused by the Jews because of this hope.

NIV Acts 26:7 This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. O king, it is because of this hope that the Jews are accusing me.

NKJ Acts 26:7 "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.

NRS Acts 26:7 a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship day and night. It is for this hope, your Excellency, that I am accused by Jews!

YLT Acts 26:7 to which our twelve tribes, intently night and day serving, do hope to come, concerning which hope I am accused, king Agrippa, by the Jews;

NAB Acts 26:7 Our twelve tribes hope to attain to that promise as they fervently worship God day and night; and on account of this hope I am accused by Jews, O king.

NJB Acts 26:7 the promise that our twelve tribes, constant in worship night and day, hope to attain. For that hope, Your Majesty, I am actually put on trial by Jews!

GWN Acts 26:7 Our twelve tribes expect this promise to be kept as they worship with intense devotion day and night. Your Majesty, the Jews are making accusations against me because I expect God to keep his promise.

BBE Acts 26:7 For the effecting of which our twelve tribes have been working and waiting night and day with all their hearts. And in connection with this hope I am attacked by the Jews, O king!

- **to which our twelve tribes hope to attain** . Ezra 6:17; 8:35. Mt 19:28. Lu. 22:30. Ja. 1:1. Rev 7:4–8.
- **as they earnestly serve God night and day** . Acts 20:31. Ps 134:1, 2; 135:2. Lu. 2:36, 37. 1 Th. 3:10. 1 Ti. 5:5.
- **And for this hope** . Lu. 2:25, 38; 7:19, 20. Phil 3:11. Acts 26:6.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### **Paul Presents His Testimony to Agrippa - Acts 26:1-21**

- Acts 26:1-3 His Congeniality
- Acts 26:4-5 His Character
- Acts 26:6-8 His Confidence
- Acts 26:9-11 His Cruelty
- Acts 26:12-15 His Conversion
- Acts 26:16-18 His Commission
- Acts 26:19-21 His Compliance

**THE JEWISH  
HOPE**

**Andrews** that "Paul had not left his orthodox beliefs—he had not denied the faith. Paul expands on it."

**the promise to which our twelve tribes hope to attain** - Paul is pointing out that even now the Twelve Tribes themselves were trying to obtain the hope. As the NLT says "In fact, that is why the twelve tribes of Israel zealously worship God night and day, and **they share the same hope I have**. Yet, Your Majesty, they accuse me for having this hope!"

**Toussaint** - Paul's reference to the **12 tribes** of Israel shows the error of British-Israelism with its "10 lost tribes of Israel" (cf. Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; James 1:1; Rev. 7:4-8; 21:12). (Bible Knowledge Commentary) (See also [Related Resources](#) below).

**MacArthur on the promise to the 12 tribes** that the **hope of the promise** "was the coming of the Messiah and His kingdom (cf. Acts 1:6; Acts 3:22–24; Acts 13:23–33; Gal. 3:17–18; Gal 4:4; Titus 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:11–12) and, specifically, the resurrection connected with His coming. It was that **promise** that was made by God throughout the Old Testament: Messiah would come to take away sin and establish His kingdom of righteousness. And it was that very **promise** to which the twelve tribes of Israel hoped to attain as they earnestly served God night and day. (Paul's mention of the twelve tribes shows that the ten northern tribes are not lost [cf. Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; James 1:1; Rev. 21:12].) Yet, incredibly, it was for proclaiming that very **hope** fulfilled in Jesus Christ that Paul was being accused by these apostate Jews. (Ibid)

**Kent**: the issue was the hope of salvation for Israel. This had been promised to the patriarchs and enlarged by the prophets to include the sending of a divine Deliverer whose coming would bring the salvation for which they longed, and would also issue in resurrection that even those who had died might participate in Messiah's reign.

**Hope** (1679)(**elpizo** from noun **elpis** = hope, absolute assurance of future good) means to look forward with confidence to that which is good and beneficial. To express desire for some good with the expectation of obtaining it.

**Constable** - Paul said that it was because of his Jewish heritage, not in spite of it, that he believed and preached what he did. The Jewish hope finds fulfillment in the Christian gospel. It was, therefore, ironic that the Jews, of all people, should have charged him with disloyalty.

#### **Related Resources:**

- [What happened to the lost tribes of Israel?](#)
- [What is British Israelism and is it biblical?](#)
- [Who are the true Israelites?](#)

**As they earnestly serve God night and day** (same phrase "night and day" Acts 20:31+) - **Gilbrant** explains that by using the word "**earnestly**" Paul was "saying that they (the Jews) still hope to attain that promise by "persistent" worship of God night and day with outstretched hands (a symbol of their earnestness)."

**Anna the prophetess** is an example of a Jew who was **earnestly** serving **God night and day**...

And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, **serving** (**latreuo**) night and day with fastings and prayers. 38 At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. (Lk 2:36-38+)

**Simeon** is another example of a Jew who was **earnestly** serving **God night and day**...

And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, 28 then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29 "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation, 31 Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel." (Lk 2:25-32+)

**Earnestly** (1616)(**ekteneia** from **ek** = out of + **teino** = to stretch) used only here in the NT and means "a state of eagerness involving perseverance over a period of time - 'earnestness, eager perseverance.'" (Louw-Nida) **BDAG** says **ekteneia** describes "a state of persistence in an undertaking or enterprise, with implication of exceptional interest or devotion." It speaks of persistent firmness of purpose. The related verb **ekteino** is used 19x in the NT and literally describes one stretching out their hand (e.g., Lk 5:13+, Lk 6:10+). And so taking the literal picture of one stretching out, in this present context **ekteneia** speaks of the fervency and

earnestness with which the Jews were worshiping and serving of God.

**Serve** ([present tense](#) = continually)(3000)([latreuo](#) from **latris** = one hired or **latron** = reward, wages) means to work for reward, for hire or for pay, to be in servitude, render cultic service. **Latreuo** was used literally for bodily service (e.g., workers on the land, or slaves), and figuratively for “to cherish.” In the NT the idea is to render service to God, to worship, to perform sacred services or to minister to God in a spirit of worship (in fact in the NT uses below, note several passages clearly associate worship with serving.) Paul used this same verb to describe himself in Acts 26 Luke recording “I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do **serve** the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets.”

**Latreuo** in Acts - Acts 7:7; Acts 7:42; Acts 24:14; Acts 26:7; Acts 27:23;

**And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews** - The **hope** that was fulfilled in Jesus Christ was the very reason for which the Jews accused him.

**David Guzik** - Paul made it clear that in both his heart and mind, he remained a faithful Jew. His trust in Jesus was an outgrowth of his trust in the hope of the promise made by God and he argued that for this hope's sake... I am accused by the Jews. ([Commentary](#))

**Fruchtenbaum** observes that “This was the second time Paul addressed Agrippa as king. This **hope** was the Messianic Hope, and the irony was that the Messianic Hope was a Jewish hope. Yet, over this issue that he was being attacked by the leadership of Israel!”

**Jack Andrews** explains that “Paul was being accused of believing that Jesus was raised from the dead in which Paul affirmed! Paul did not deny the resurrection! God had promised his people that there would be a resurrection. Job 19:25-26 says, “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; 26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God” In Ezekiel 37:1-14 God promised there would be a resurrection. The Jews—who believed the Old Testament believed there was life after death and there was a promise of the resurrection. Paul says that it was for this hope's sake that he was accused by the Jews. Paul believed in the resurrection—the **dividing point was over the resurrection of Jesus Christ— whom the Jews refused to belief was raised**. Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ there is no salvation in Jesus Christ. God raised Jesus from the dead—He is the Living, Reigning—Lord!.”

**Hope** (1680)([elpis](#)) in Scripture is not the world's definition of “I **hope** so”, with a few rare exceptions (e.g., Acts 27:20) **Hope** is defined as a desire for some future good with the expectation of obtaining it. **Hope** is always an expectation of something good as well as descriptive of something for which we must wait. **Hope** is the opposite of despair. And the opposite of a “living hope” is a “dead hope.”

**Hope** is a key term in Acts - Acts 2:26; Acts 16:19; Acts 23:6; Acts 24:15; Acts 26:6; Acts 26:7; Acts 27:20; Acts 28:20;

**Howard Marshall** on **hope** - It refers to the believing expectation that God will fulfil the promises and prophecies made in the Old Testament, and for Paul it refers specifically to the belief that these promises have been and will be fulfilled in Jesus. The question at issue is thus whether the Jews believe in the fulfilment of God's promises. More precisely, the specific hope that Paul has in mind is that of the resurrection from the dead which will bring God's people into the experience of salvation. The Jews hoped to attain to this experience, which they described as ‘the age to come’, by their devotion to God expressed in continuous worship.(TNTC-Acts)

**Comment** - I would add to Marshall's statement that the hope “**will be fulfilled in Jesus**.” Hope was fulfilled with His resurrection, for now all who believe in Him will experience that hope (figuratively we have been raised with Him as in Ro 6:5+, but literally we await a future resurrection - 1 Cor 15:44). In addition, the hope of Israel receiving a Kingdom will also be fulfilled in Jesus, for when He returns, He will defeat all His enemies and establish His [Messianic Kingdom](#) for which the Jews had been looking (it was their hope - absolute certainty that God would do them good in the future. See comments on Acts 1:6).

**Spurgeon** - The Jews still had hope concerning the promise of the Messiah, and all the promises in God's covenant with them; and Paul says that for the sake of this hope he had been led to do that which had now brought him as a prisoner before the king. Notice that the fiction concerning “the ten lost tribes” has no foundation in Scripture. There are no lost tribes, several of them are mentioned by name in the New Testament; the apostle James writes “to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad,” and here Paul speaks of them as “**our twelve tribes**.” The Jews whom we have among us at this day belong to all of the twelve tribes, as they will tell you if you ask them. There are no lost tribes yet to be discovered, neither are we, as a nation, those ten tribes that are supposed to have been lost. We are Gentiles, and not Jews. The apostle speaks here concerning the hope of the whole nation of the Jews. We who have believed in Jesus are the inheritors of that grand hope, as we have understood it aright, and have realized that it is fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only-begotten Son of God.

**Being accused** ([present tense](#) - continually being accused)(1458)([egkaleo](#) from **en** = in + **kaleo** = to call) was a legal technical

term meaning to bring charges against, institute proceedings against someone. All 7 NT uses - Acts 19:38; Acts 19:40; Acts 23:28; Acts 23:29; Acts 26:2; Acts 26:7; Rom. 8:33

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**James Smith** - When King Agrippa came to Cæsarea to salute Festus, the new governor, he was told the story of Paul, the prisoner; how the charges brought against him had not been proven, and how he had “appealed to Cæsar.” Festus was quite pleased that Agrippa should hear him on the morrow, in the hope that this might help him out of the “unreasonableness” of sending a prisoner to Augustus without being able to “signify the crimes laid against him.” So Paul is brought out once more and permitted to speak for himself. The apostle’s defence was the story of his conversion—this was always his apologetic for Christianity. Like the sword of Goliath, “there is none like it.” It so affected Festus that he thought Paul had gone mad through “much learning;” it so touched the conscience of Agrippa that he said, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” Look at Paul’s defence, then, as revealing the characteristics of a true Christian—

**I. HE IS A CHANGED MAN** (Acts 26:9–15).—Once he did many things contrary to the name of Jesus. Now he was His bond-slave. The change was radical and complete, wrought not by the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God. He was born from above. No one can be a Christian without being “born again.” A new nature is needed before we can see the things of the kingdom of God, or enjoy the fellowship of Christ, the only begotten of the Father.

**II. HE IS AN EMPOWERED MAN.**—Empowered by the Lord Jesus Christ to be a witness unto Him by opening the eyes of sin-blinded men, and turning them from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26:16–18). God does not send us a warfare on our own charges (Acts 1:8). The evidence that a man is sent by God is that he does the work that none others can do by their own strength and wisdom. Signs must follow those who believe.

**III. HE IS AN OBEDIENT MAN.**—“I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision” (Acts 26:19). To be disobedient to the heavenly call is to seal our own spiritual doom. Neither did he dishonour Him who had called him by immediately conferring with flesh and blood (Gal. 1:15–16). He settled the matter right off with the Lord Himself as to what he would do.

**IV. HE IS A DIVINELY HELPED MAN.**—“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day” (Acts 26:21–22). He had been often persecuted, but never forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. He had experienced the promise of his Lord—“I will never leave thee.” Every faithful servant of Christ will be able, at the close of life, to raise an Ebenezer to the honour of His name. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

**V. HE IS A DEVOTED MAN.**—“Saying none other things than those ... that Christ should suffer” (Acts 26:23). Paul was wholly yielded up to the interests of Christ and His cross. He meant it when he said, “To me to live is Christ. I am determined to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” Unless our lives are entirely yielded up to Him our testimony for Him will be powerless and fruitless.

**VI. HE IS A MISUNDERSTOOD MAN.**—Festus said, “Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad” (Acts 26:24). The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness unto him. To those who are in a perishing condition “the preaching of the cross is foolishness” (1 Cor. 1:18). The disciple is not greater than his Lord. Did they not say of Christ, He hath a devil and is mad? (John 10:20).

**VII. HE IS A COURTEOUS MAN.**—“I am not mad, most noble Festus.” Honour to whom honour is due. The grace of God will always teach a man to be civil. There is no man on earth who can better afford to honour the nobility than the Christian, for he himself has been exalted into the ranks of the blood-royal of heaven. Children of God.

**VIII. HE IS A FAITHFUL MAN.**—“King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?” This personal appeal to the king must surely have come to him with startling suddenness, while it reveals the simple, fearless courage of the man whose heart God had transformed, and perhaps a real longing for the spiritual and eternal well-being of Agrippa. Paul had always an eye on his Master’s business; pulling men out of the fire of sin.

**IX. HE IS A SATISFIED MAN.**—When Agrippa confessed that he was “Almost persuaded to be a Christian,” see how quickly Paul shows him that it is the better part. “I would to God that thou and all ... were altogether such as I am, except these bonds” (Acts 26:29). There was not a richer or happier man in Caesarea than Paul. The peace of God was in his heart, and the unsearchable riches of Christ were his.

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#### The Hope of Israel - Charles Roll -

O the hope of Israel, the Savior thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest Thou be as a stranger in the land?...  
O LORD, the **hope of Israel**, all that forsake Thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from Me shall be



written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters (Jeremiah 14:8; 17:13).

Because that for the **hope of Israel** I am bound with this chain (Acts 28:20).

The Hope of Israel is definitely a title of Messiah. It is related to the kingdom of God and the salvation of God as predicted by the prophets and preached by Paul (Acts 26:6-8). On account of this very testimony Paul was apprehended by the Jews and arraigned before the governors of the land. "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: 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. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"

The dignified, descriptive declaration of Paul's defense before King Agrippa is one of the finest pieces of oratory in all literature. He did not contend with the Jews over their false charge of sedition, but confined his statement to the superlative subject of salvation. He courageously and capably affirmed that the reconciling death and victorious resurrection of Christ fulfilled the predictions of prophets and the pledges of the promises made to the Fathers. This was the apostle's constant theme (see Romans 15:8-13). He did not modify or qualify the fact at any time, but affirmed it clearly and confidently. The resurrection from the dead is bound up inextricably with the Hope of Israel and is affirmed by Abraham, Job, Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel, Hosea, and others of the prophets. Messiah himself avowed, "I am the resurrection and the life." In the light of the almighty omnipotent God, resurrection from the dead is not incredible but inevitable, for He has pledged it, and one word from the Lord God outweighs in worth and wisdom a whole library of human utterances.

The arresting grandeur of Christ's monumental mastery over death, the momentous marvel of His resurrection, and the matchless miracle of His ascension, dim into insignificance all former events in history.

Scientists may speak of a general resurrection as being a grave difficulty, but the word difficulty is not in the dictionary of Deity, nor is impossibility in the vocabulary of the victorious and infinite Christ. We do not flout human science nor do we fear it, but we favor a much higher fount of authority. If the present radio and recording system had been described in a university a century ago, it would have been declared preposterous. When Paul the apostle introduced this subject of the Hope of Israel, he raised eternal issues that were universal in their then present application. In the wonderful message of Romans 15 Paul declares in verses 8 and 9: "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy."

The promises of God are supported and sustained by wisdom's seven pillars (Proverbs 9:1).

1. God's superiority and sovereignty will not allow Him to withhold mercy or mediation from any one people (Psalm 145:9; Isaiah 55:7).
2. His power and preeminence will not permit Him to fail or falter in a single pledge He has made (Joshua 23:14).
3. His justice and prudence will not allow Him to deceive or despise one solitary soul (Job 34:12; 36:5).
4. His grace and goodness will not allow Him to forget or forsake any individual creature anywhere (Ezekiel 18:4; Isaiah 49:15).
5. His truth and tenderness will not permit Him to change or countermand one syllable of His covenant (2 Samuel 23:5; Jeremiah 31:33-35; Luke 1:68-72).
6. His glory and greatness will not allow Him to deflect or defer one proffered signal of help (Hebrews 13:6).
7. His fatherhood and faithfulness will not permit Him to disregard or discard an atom of assurance promised to the believing soul (Galatians 3:15-21; 2 Corinthians 1:20).

Notice that the word promise occurs seven times in Galatians; three, in the space of as many verses; which pertains to the covenant confirmed before of God in Christ (verse 17). This covers the widest range (Galatians 3:27-29; see also Ephesians 1:9-10). "Behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth... there is nothing too hard for Thee" (Jeremiah 32:17). "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for Me?" (Jeremiah 32:27) In addition to faith in the promises, the believer enjoys the blessed anchorage of hope in the eternal purpose which preceded all the differences of nation, race, class, creed, and sex. (The Names and Titles of Jesus Christ)

**Acts 26:8 "Why is it considered incredible among you *people* if God does raise the dead?"**

BGT Acts 26:8 τ πιστον κρ νεται παρ μ ν ε θε ς νεκρο ς γε ρει;

NET Acts 26:8 Why do you people think it is unbelievable that God raises the dead?

GNT Acts 26:8 τ πιστον κρ νεται παρ μ ν ε θε ς νεκρο ς γε ρει;

NLT Acts 26:8 Why does it seem incredible to any of you that God can raise the dead?

KJV Acts 26:8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

ESV Acts 26:8 Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

CSB Acts 26:8 Why is it considered incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

NIV Acts 26:8 Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

NKJ Acts 26:8 "Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

NRS Acts 26:8 Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

YLT Acts 26:8 why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?

NAB Acts 26:8 Why is it thought unbelievable among you that God raises the dead?

NJB Acts 26:8 Why does it seem incredible to you that God should raise the dead?

GWN Acts 26:8 Why do all of you refuse to believe that God can bring dead people back to life?

BBE Acts 26:8 Why, in your opinion, is it outside belief for God to make the dead come to life again?

- Acts 4:2; 10:40–42; 13:30, 31; 17:31, 32; 25:19. Ge. 18:14. Mt 22:29–32. Lu. 1:37; 18:27. Jn 5:28, 29. 1 Co. 15:12–20. Phil 3:21
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### Paul Presents His Testimony to Agrippa - Acts 26:1-21

- Acts 26:1-3 His Congeniality
- Acts 26:4-5 His Character
- Acts 26:6-8 His Confidence
- Acts 26:9-11 His Cruelty
- Acts 26:12-15 His Conversion
- Acts 26:16-18 His Commission
- Acts 26:19-21 His Compliance

#### Related Resource:

- See verse by verse commentary on 1 Corinthians 15 the "Resurrection Chapter"

## THE INCREDIBLE RESURRECTION

**Why is it considered incredible among you *people* if God does raise the dead?** - The IF introduces a first class condition which assumes God does raise the dead. This is a rhetorical question. It is another way of asking is anything impossible for God? Of course not. He could raise the dead and the Jews who belonged to the sect of Pharisees believed that was possible.

**Robertson of raise the dead** - "Only God can do it. This rhetorical question needs no answer, though the narrative resumed in Acts 26:9 does it in a way."

**Paul Apple** aptly observes that "Abrahamic promises make no sense apart from a future hope."

**Fruchtenbaum** - The second **hope** that he was being attacked for was the resurrection hope in verse 8: Why is it judged incredible with you, if God does raise the dead? In the Greek, Paul used the second person plural here (**you**), indicating that he had turned away from Agrippa and was now addressing the general audience. Paul's question to them was: Why is it judged incredible with you [all], if God does raise the dead? If God is who He is, then He can raise the dead. Paul's point, of course, was that God did raise Yeshua. The key issue then, is the Messianic Hope and the resurrection hope. (Messianic Bible Study)

**Marshall** - The point at issue was Paul's belief in the resurrection. He takes the offensive by asking why it should be thought incredible that God raises the dead. The question is asked in general terms. For Pharisees there should have been no difficulty,

since in general they did believe in the resurrection. The Sadducees did not believe in it, but they could well be asked why they regarded it as something that God could not accomplish. But of course, although Paul asks the question in general terms, **the real point at issue is the resurrection of Jesus which attested that he was the Messiah: why should that be thought incredible?** (TNTC-Acts)

**David Guzik** - Since Agrippa was an expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews (Acts 26:3), he should have understood the belief that God could, or would, raise the dead. Why should it be thought incredible that God can do anything? As Jesus said, with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26). Yet it should be especially easy for Agrippa to believe that God raises the dead, given some clear statements in the Old Testament (such as Job 19:25-27), the nature of God, and the intuitive grasp of the eternal among mankind. ([Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** adds that "The pronoun **you** in Acts 26:8 is plural, so Paul must have looked around at the entire audience as he spoke. The Greeks and Romans, of course, would not believe in the doctrine of the Resurrection (Acts 17:31, 32+), nor would the [Sadducees](#) who were present (Acts 23:8+). To Paul, this was a crucial doctrine, for if there is no Resurrection, then Jesus Christ was not raised and Paul had no Gospel to preach. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - By raising Jesus from the dead, God validated the Old Testament promise of resurrection, at the same time demonstrating that Jesus was Israel's long-awaited Messiah. But it was just this point that Agrippa, along with many other Jews, was not willing to concede. Most Jews (except for the Sadducees, Matt. 22:23) accepted the general concept of resurrection (cf. John 5:28-29; 11:24). What they did not accept was that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and was their Messiah. (ibid)

**F F Bruce** - That a faithful Pharisee believed in the resurrection of the dead, and saw no fulfilment of Israel's ancient **hope** apart from the resurrection, went without saying. But the amazing and indeed absurd feature of the present dispute was that he was being prosecuted for his proclamation of this very **hope** – and prosecuted by Jews, of all people! But this **hope** was the **hope** that God would keep the promise which He made to the fathers of the nation long ago; it was the **hope** which gave life and meaning and purpose to the ordinances of divine worship, faithfully maintained by all twelve tribes of Israel generation after generation – the **hope** that God would one day come down to deliver His people as He had done when they were slaves in Egypt, that He would raise up a horn of salvation for them "in the house of His servant David, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old" (cf. Luke 1:69f+).

**Henry Morris** on **incredible** - It would be **incredible** if anyone but God (or those empowered by him) should claim to raise the dead, for only He is the Creator of life. To Paul, it was both anomalous and sad that the Jews, especially the Pharisees, whose hope was centered in the coming Messiah and the promised resurrection, should now be denying that Jesus had proved He was the Messiah by the very fact of His fulfillment of their hope. They believed in the doctrine of the resurrection, especially when the evidence was so strong that many Pharisees (including Paul) already had believed. (Defender's Study Bible)

**Gilbrant** - Agrippa would know that as a Pharisee Paul always believed in the future resurrection of the body and future judgments. Agrippa must also have known the Christians believed God had raised Jesus from the dead and made His resurrection the guarantee of theirs. Actually, since God is God, and since the Old Testament teaches that nothing is too hard, too wonderful, or too impossible for God, it should not have been hard for Agrippa to believe, especially now that God had raised Jesus from the dead. (Ibid)

**Incredible** (571)([apistos](#) from **a** = without + **pistos** = believing, faithful) means lacking in faith, without faith, disbelieving, unbelieving. It is used once to describe that which is **incredible** (Acts 26:8), but most NT uses describe those without faith, not trusting, unfaithful.

**Robertson** on **incredible** - This old word **apistos** (a privative and **pistos**) means either unfaithful (Luke 12:46), unbelieving (John 20:27), or unbelievable as here. Paul turns suddenly from Agrippa to the audience (**among you** = par' humin, plural), most of whom were probably Gentiles and [scouted](#) (archaic definition = rejected) the doctrine of the resurrection as at Athens (Acts 17:32).

**If God does raise the dead** - The "if" is first class conditional and assumes it as a fact. Praise His holy Name - God does indeed raise the dead!

**Raise** ( (1453)([egeiro](#)) means to rise (stand up) from a sitting or lying position (Mt 8:26, 9:5), to awaken from sleep (Mt 8:25), figuratively to "awaken" from death (rise up).

**Spurgeon** - That great fact of the resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone of the temple of truth, the key-stone of the arch of the Gospel. The apostles made this truth very prominent in their preaching, and here Paul began his address with it. It was the great difficulty of the Christian religion at that period, so Paul went straight to it at once.

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

Concerning the souls of our departed Christian friends we suffer no distress. Our main trouble is about their bodies. Even the perfect Man could not restrain His weeping at Lazarus' tomb. The doctrine of the Resurrection teaches us that we need have no trouble about the body, it has not gone to annihilation. The Lord's love to His people is a love towards their entire manhood. He took into union with His Deity both soul and body, and redeemed both, and both are sanctified by the Divine indwelling. So our complete manhood shall have it in its power to glorify Him forever. This being our hope, we nevertheless confess that sometimes the evil heart of unbelief cries, "Is it possible?" At such times the text is needful.

## I. LET US LOOK THIS DIFFICULTY IN THE FACE.

We rejoice in the fact that there will be a great change in the body; that its materialism will have lost all its grossness and corruption, and that it will be adapted for higher purposes; but there shall be an identity between the body in which we die and the body in which we rise. Not, however, that identity is the same thing as absolute sameness of substance and continuance of atoms. We are living in the same bodies which we possessed twenty years ago; yet no single atom remains that was in it then. Admit the like identity in the resurrection, and it is all we ask. Now this hope is naturally surrounded with many difficulties, because: —

1. The large majority of dead bodies have been utterly dissolved.
2. Think how widely diffused are the atoms which once built up living forms.
3. The difficulty increases when we reflect that all men will rise again. Think of the myriads who have passed away in countries like China, of those who have perished by shipwreck, plague, and war.
4. The wonder increases when we remember in what strange places many of these bodies now are. In fact, where are not man's remains? Blows there a single wind down our streets without whirling along particles of what once was man?
5. And, moreover, to make the wonder extraordinary beyond conception, they will rise at once, or perhaps in two great divisions (Revelation 20:5, 6). Where shall they stand? What plains of earth shall hold them?
6. And then this resurrection will not be a mere restoration, but in the case of the saints will involve a remarkable advance. We put into the ground a bulb, and it rises as a golden lily; we drop into the mould a seed, and it comes forth an exquisite flower; even thus, the bodies, which are sown in burial, shall spring up by Divine power into outgrowths, surpassing all imagination in beauty.
7. One of the difficulties of believing it is, that there are positively no full analogies in nature by which to support it. Some have seen in sleep the analogy of death, and in our awakening the resurrection. But a continuance of life is manifest to the man in his dreams and to all onlookers. The development of insects is quoted as a striking analogy. But there is life in the chrysalis, organisation, in fact, the entire fly. Nor is the analogy of the seed much more conclusive, for a life germ always remains, and the crumbling organisation becomes its food from which it builds itself up again. The resurrection stands alone; and, concerning it, the Lord might well say, "Behold, I do a new thing in the earth." Here, then, is the difficulty. Is it a credible thing that the dead should be raised?

## II. REMOVE THE DIFFICULTY.

It might seem incredible that the dead should be raised, but why should it seem incredible that God should raise the dead? Grant that God is, that He is omnipotent, and that He has said the dead shall be raised, and belief is no longer hard but inevitable. Difficulty is not in the dictionary of the Godhead. Is anything too hard for the Lord?

1. When Paul uttered our text he was speaking to one to whom he could say, "Believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest!" It was, therefore, good reasoning to say, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you?" etc. For, as a Jew, Agrippa had the testimony of Job — "For I know that my Redeemer liveth"; and of David (Psalm 16); of Isaiah (Isaiah 26:19); of Daniel (Daniel 12:2, 3); of Hosea (Hosea 13:14).
2. To us as Christians there has been granted yet fuller evidence (John 5:28; John 6:30; Romans 8:11; Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:1).
3. At the same time it may be well to look around us, and note what helps the Lord has appointed for our faith.
  - (1) There are many wonders which we should not have believed by mere report, if we had not come across them by experience. The electric telegraph, e.g. When our missionaries in tropical countries have told the natives of ice, the natives have refused to believe. After the resurrection we shall regard it as a Divine display of power as familiar to us as creation and Providence now are.
  - (2) Will resurrection be a greater wonder than creation? To create out of nothing is quite as marvellous as to

call together scattered particles and refashion them.

(3) Christ rose again and He is the cause of your resurrection, the type of it, the foretaste of it, the guarantee of it.

(4) Remember also, that you who are Christians have already experienced as great a work as the resurrection, for you have risen from the dead as to your innermost nature.

### III. OUR RELATION TO THIS TRUTH

1. Comfort one another with these words. You have lost those dear to you. Sorrow ye must, but sorrow not as those that are without hope.
2. Let us cheer our hearts in prospect of our own departure.
3. Expecting a blessed resurrection, let us respect our bodies. Bodies that are to dwell forever in heaven, should not be subjected to pollution here below.
4. The ungodly are to rise again, but it will be to a resurrection of woe. "Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

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#### Acts 26:1-8 Incredible? By M.R. De Haan

Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead. —Acts 26:8

If Jesus did not rise from the dead and there is no future day of resurrection for us, then life loses all its meaning. If this life is all there is—just a few years of alternate crying and laughing (mostly crying) and then darkness—with Paul we can say, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Cor. 15:19).

Resurrection, however, is not an incredible, irrational idea. We can see illustrations of resurrection all around us in nature. For example, Egyptian garden peas that had been buried for 3,000 years were brought out and planted on June 4, 1844. Within a few days they had germinated and broken the ground. Buried for 3,000 years—then resurrected. That's amazing! Why then should it be thought incredible that God should raise the dead? That was the surprised question of Paul to King Agrippa (Acts 26:8). If God could take some dust and breathe life into it to create a man (Gen. 2:7), why would anyone think it incredible for this same God to raise someone from the dead? Yes, it is most credible that Jesus would arise. It would be incredible if after the miraculous life He lived He had remained in the grave. Hallelujah! Christ arose! —M. R. De Haan, M.D. (founder of RBC Ministries) ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Up from the grave He arose,  
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes;  
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,  
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.  
—Lowry

Only a living Savior could rescue a dying world.

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#### Acts 26:9 "So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

Amplified - I myself indeed was [once] persuaded that it was my duty to do many things contrary to *and* in defiance of the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

NET Acts 26:9 Of course, I myself was convinced that it was necessary to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus the Nazarene.

GNT Acts 26:9 γ μ ν ο ν δοξα μαυτ πρ ς τ νομα ησο το Ναζωρα ου δε ν πολλ ναντ α πρ ξαι,

NLT Acts 26:9 "I used to believe that I ought to do everything I could to oppose the very name of Jesus the Nazarene.

KJV Acts 26:9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

ESV Acts 26:9 "I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

CSB Acts 26:9 In fact, I myself supposed it was necessary to do many things in opposition to the name of

Jesus the Nazarene.

NIV Acts 26:9 "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

NKJ Acts 26:9 "Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

NRS Acts 26:9 "Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

YLT Acts 26:9 'I, indeed, therefore, thought with myself, that against the name of Jesus of Nazareth it behoved me many things to do,

NAB Acts 26:9 I myself once thought that I had to do many things against the name of Jesus the Nazorean,

NJB Acts 26:9 'As for me, I once thought it was my duty to use every means to oppose the name of Jesus the Nazarene.

GWN Acts 26:9 "I used to think that I had to do a lot of things to oppose the one named Jesus of Nazareth.

BBE Acts 26:9 For I, truly, was of the opinion that it was right for me to do a number of things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

- **I thought to myself that** Jn 16:2, 3. Ro. 10:2. Gal 1:13, 14. Phil 3:6. 1 Ti. 1:13.
- **hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth** Acts 3:6; Acts 9:16; Acts 21:13; Acts 22:8; Acts 24:5.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### Paul Presents His Testimony to Agrippa - Acts 26:1-21

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- Acts 26:4-5 His Character
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- Acts 26:12-15 His Conversion
- Acts 26:16-18 His Commission
- Acts 26:19-21 His Compliance

### PAUL'S HOSTILITY TOWARD JESUS OF NAZARETH

**So then** - This phrase resumes Paul's discussion about his past life.

**I thought to myself** - Self-deception. Paul thought he was right, but he was wrong. As **Robertson** says "Paul's "egoism" is deceived as so often happens."

**That I had to do many things hostile to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth**- Notice the phrase "**to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth**." Paul here is saying the hostile things he was doing against Christians were in fact ultimately against the **Name**, against **Jesus** Himself, a truth that Jesus revealed to him on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:5+, Acts 22:7-8+, Acts 26:14-15+). He also uses the Name "**Nazareth**" even as Spirit filled Peter did when he preached to the Jews at Pentecost calling Him "**Jesus the Nazarene**." (Acts 2:22+, cf Acts 3:6+, Acts 4:10+, Acts 10:38+ cf Jesus words in Acts 22:8+). Neither Peter nor Paul were ashamed that Jesus had come from such a lowly, out of the way, even despised village called Nazareth (cf the contempt of the Jews in Acts 6:14+). And neither should we be ashamed that we are followers of a Jewish Man Who is still despised by most of the world! And we won't be ashamed when we are filled with His Spirit, for His Spirit glorifies Jesus! (Jn 16:8).

**I had to do** is a bit weak, as the verb is **dei** which means he was under obligation to carry out ([present tense](#) - continually) these hostile actions. It was a "must" not a "should." **Robertson** adds that "Necessity and a sense of duty drove Paul on even in this great sin, a common failing with persecutors."

**Larkin** - Pharisee though he was, Paul did not believe that a resurrection had occurred in the case of Jesus. It seemed to him that it was his moral duty (*dei*) *to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth*-that is, Christ's presence and power among his people

Luke records some of the hostile things Paul did.



Acts 8:1-3+ Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him (STEPHEN) to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.

Acts 9:1-2+ Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Acts 22:4-5+ I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons, 5 as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished.

**Spurgeon** - For Paul was the kind of man who, if he thought he ought to do anything, he always did it. Even in his unregenerate state, his conscience, unenlightened as it was, swayed him; but now, with an enlightened conscience, he looked back upon that part of his life with deep regret, and he did not fail to acknowledge and mourn the wrong that he had ignorantly done to the Lord Jesus Christ and his faithful followers.

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### Sincerity Misguided - [H. W. Beecher](#)

- I truly thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth....

It is often said it is no matter what a man believes if he is only sincere. This is true of all minor truths, and false of all truths whose nature it is to fashion a man's life. It will make no difference in a man's harvest whether he think turnips have more saccharine matter than potatoes, whether corn is better than wheat. But let the man sincerely believe that seed planted without plowing is as good as with, that January is as favorable for seed sowing as April, and that cockle seed will produce as good a harvest as wheat, and will it make no difference? A child might as well think he could reverse that ponderous marine engine which night and day, in calm and storm, plows its way across the deep, by sincerely taking hold of the paddle wheel, as a man might think he could reverse the action of the elements of God's moral government through a misguided sincerity. They will roll over such a one, and whelm him in endless ruin.

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### What's Your Story? Read: Acts 26:9-18

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. —Acts 16:31

Every believer has a unique story of encountering Christ. Ann, a receptionist at RBC Ministries, told me that she has kept a journal for much of her life. She treasures the account she recorded about her conversion when she was 15. Here is an excerpt. "[I] went to see Billy Graham. I got saved! I'm very happy. . . . When I got saved I felt warmth in my heart."

Years ago, in a personal evangelism course I taught, I asked the students to write out their story of how they came to faith in Christ. It struck me how different each journey was. Some were saved out of a life of drugs and immorality. Others were church attenders who came to Christ after years of biblical instruction.

Conversions vary. The apostle Paul had a crisis encounter with the Savior that turned him from a persecutor into a preacher of the gospel (Acts 26). In contrast, Timothy was quietly nurtured in the Scriptures from early childhood, resulting in his salvation experience (2 Tim. 3:14-15). No two faith journeys are identical. But each has the common element of turning to the Lord Jesus in faith to be saved from sin and to receive a new heart.

Can you retrace the steps that God helped you take in coming to Christ? What's your story? By Dennis Fisher [Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

We once were held by Satan's chains,  
Imprisoned by our sin;  
Then Jesus Christ delivered us  
And made us new within.  
—Sper

We need more than a new start—we need a new heart!

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## No Need for Dead Reckoning - Selwyn Lewis

In fact, I myself supposed it was necessary to do many things in opposition to the name of Jesus the Nazarene.—ACTS 26:9

The place where we can see life as a whole is in the sanctuary of God, or, if you prefer, in the presence of God. There we are reminded of things we have forgotten or ignored. See how the Good News Bible translates Acts 26:9: "I myself thought that I should do everything I could against the cause of Jesus of Nazareth." Here you see the root of Paul's problem: "I myself thought." And is not that the underlying cause of many of our problems too? We say, "I myself thought ..." instead of asking: "What does God think?" Sometimes sailors will attempt to establish the position of their ships by estimating the distance and direction they have traveled, rather than by astronomical observation. This is called "dead reckoning." It is sometimes necessary in foul weather, but it is fraught with peril. One mariner has said: "Undue trust in the dead reckoning has produced more disastrous shipwrecks of seaworthy ships than all other causes put together."

There are people who attempt the voyage of life by dead reckoning, but there is no need. God has charted the map for us with loving care in the Scriptures, and our plain duty is to study the chart so that we might become better acquainted with His purposes and His ways. For the better we know the Scriptures, the better we will know God. We cannot ignore the facts of history or science—they help—but if our perspective is not drawn from the Scriptures it will lead us astray. We must not rely on dead reckoning but on divine reckoning.

**Acts 26:10 "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."**

BGT Acts 26:10 κα πο ησα ν εροσολ μοις, κα πολλο ς τε τ ν γ ων γ ν φυλακα ς κατ κλεισα τ ν παρ τ ν ρχιερ ων ξουσ αν λαβ ν ναιρουμ νων τε α τ ν κατ νεγκα ψ φον.

NET Acts 26:10 And that is what I did in Jerusalem: Not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons by the authority I received from the chief priests, but I also cast my vote against them when they were sentenced to death.

GNT Acts 26:10 κα πο ησα ν εροσολ μοις, κα πολλο ς τε τ ν γ ων γ ν φυλακα ς κατ κλεισα τ ν παρ τ ν ρχιερ ων ξουσ αν λαβ ν ναιρουμ νων τε α τ ν κατ νεγκα ψ φον.

NLT Acts 26:10 Indeed, I did just that in Jerusalem. Authorized by the leading priests, I caused many believers there to be sent to prison. And I cast my vote against them when they were condemned to death.

KJV Acts 26:10 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.

ESV Acts 26:10 And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them.

CSB Acts 26:10 I actually did this in Jerusalem, and I locked up many of the saints in prison, since I had received authority for that from the chief priests. When they were put to death, I cast my vote against them.

NIV Acts 26:10 And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them.

NKJ Acts 26:10 "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.

NRS Acts 26:10 And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death.

YLT Acts 26:10 which also I did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I in prison did shut up, from the chief priests having received the authority; they also being put to death, I gave my vote against them,

NAB Acts 26:10 and I did so in Jerusalem. I imprisoned many of the holy ones with the authorization I received from the chief priests, and when they were to be put to death I cast my vote against them.

NJB Acts 26:10 This I did in Jerusalem; I myself threw many of God's holy people into prison, acting on authority from the chief priests, and when they were being sentenced to death I cast my vote against them.

GWN Acts 26:10 That is what I did in Jerusalem. By the authority I received from the chief priests, I locked many Christians in prison. I voted to have them killed every time a vote was taken.

BBE Acts 26:10 And this I did in Jerusalem: and numbers of the saints I put in prison, having had authority given to me from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my decision against them.

- **And this is just what I did in Jerusalem** Acts 7:58; 8:1, 3; 9:13, 26; 22:4, 19, 20. 1 Co. 15:9. Gal 1:13.
- **not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons** Acts 9:32, 41. Ps 16:3. Ro. 15:25, 26. Ep. 1:1. Rev 17:6.
- **having received authority from the chief priests**. Acts 9:14, 21; 22:5.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

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- Acts 26:19-21 His Compliance

### SAUL CAST THE BLACK PEBBLE AGAINST CHRISTIANS

**And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons** The word for **lock up** (only here and Lk 3:20) is [katakleio](#) which means to shut down like a trap door, to shut up in prison, to confine (in Lxx Jer 39:3). Louw-Nida says it means "to cause a person to be consigned to prison."

Earlier Luke had recorded that after Stephen's martyrdom

"Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison." (Acts 8:3+)

Paul had a reputation in Jerusalem for being a persecutor of Christians

But Ananias answered (context Acts 9:11,12+), "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; (Acts 9:13+)

When he (Saul) came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.(Acts 9:26+)

In his letter to the Galatians Paul wrote

"you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it." (Galatians 1:13+)

**Saints** (40) ([hagios](#)) means the set apart ones, separated ones, sanctified ones, holy ones) is literally a holy one and depending on the context refers to whoever or whatever is set apart (sanctified) for a special purpose. These men and women Paul persecuted had been set apart (by the Spirit) from the world and to God, to serve Him and worship Him.

**Gilbrant** - In the New Testament a saint is one who has turned his back on the world to follow Jesus.

**Having received authority from the chief priests** - So much for the religious leadership. Of course one would not expect anything different from them because they were prime instigators in the murder of Jesus. And note that Paul a Pharisee was now cooperating with the Sadducees (chief priests were Sadducees). This recalls the old adage [The enemy of my enemy is my friend](#).

**Having received** - The **chief priests** ([archiereus](#)) were in collusion with Paul in these crimes against humanity and ultimately against Christ. Religious people are always some of the most vicious persecutors of those who adhere to Biblical Christianity and belief in Christ.

**Authority** (1849) ([exousia](#) from [éxesti](#) = it is permitted, it is lawful meaning liberty of action) refers to delegated authority and combines the idea of the "right and the might", these attributes having been granted to Saul by the Jewish religious leaders.

**But also when they were being put to death** ([anaireo](#) in [present tense](#)) - Talk about count the cost! (cf Mk 8:34-36). This would make superficial professions of faith almost non-existent! We see this in many "closed" countries where confession of faith will cost you your life!

**I cast my vote against them** - Some have proposed that Paul's statement that he cast his vote against them suggests he was a member of the Sanhedrin but most commentaries do not favor that interpretation.

**Robertson** - "I cast down my pebble" (a black one). The ancient Greeks used white pebbles for acquittal (Rev. 2:17), black ones for condemnation as here (the only two uses of the word in the N.T.). Paul's phrase (not found elsewhere) is more vivid than the usual *katapsēphizō* for voting. They literally cast the pebbles into the urn. Cf. *sumpsēphizō* in Acts 19:19, *sugkatapsephizo* in Acts 1:26. If Paul's language is taken literally here, he was a member of the Sanhedrin and so married when he led the persecution. That is quite possible, though he was not married when he wrote 1 Cor. 7:7-8, but a widower. It is possible to take the language figuratively for approval, but not so natural.

**I cast my vote against them** - Literally in Greek = "cast down ([kataphero](#)) a pebble ([psephos](#)) against them." This is a Greek idiom "to bring a pebble against someone" referring to a white (for acquittal) or black (for conviction) pebble which was used in to vote for or against someone. Paul willingly participated in putting believers to death by his act of voting for their execution.

This recalls Saul's actions when Stephen was being stoned to death...

Acts 7:58+ When they had driven him (Stephen) out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

Acts 8:1+ Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him (Stephen) to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

**Spurgeon** - He had the courage of his convictions. Believing a thing, he did not let it lie idle. He regarded the Christians as a pestilent sect, and, therefore, he hunted them down. He abhorred the name of Jesus of Nazareth as that of an imposter, and, therefore, he determined that no stone should be left unturned to overthrow his power. (**Ed:** In fact he cast his "stone" against the saints!)

How many Christians were actually put to death during the time Paul was persecuting Christians? Paul may simply be generalizing here based on his involvement in the death of Stephen, but there could have been other Christians who suffered this fate. However on the other hand recall that the Jews did not have permission to execute Christians, so the stoning of Stephen was illegal in Roman eyes.

**Acts 26:11 "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.**

Amplified - And frequently I punished them in all the synagogues to make them blaspheme; and in my bitter fury against them, I harassed (troubled, molested, persecuted) *and* pursued them even to foreign cities.

NET Acts 26:11 I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to force them to blaspheme. Because I was so furiously enraged at them, I went to persecute them even in foreign cities.

GNT Acts 26:11 καὶ κατὰ πᾶσας τὰς συναγωγὰς πολλὰκις τιμωρὺν αὐτοῦ ἐγκαλῶν βλασφημεῖν περισσὸς τε μᾶλλον αὐτοῦ ὄντων ὥς καὶ ἐς τὰς ξένων πόλεις.

NLT Acts 26:11 Many times I had them punished in the synagogues to get them to curse Jesus. I was so violently opposed to them that I even chased them down in foreign cities.

KJV Acts 26:11 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.

ESV Acts 26:11 And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

CSB Acts 26:11 In all the synagogues I often tried to make them blaspheme by punishing them. I even pursued them to foreign cities since I was greatly enraged at them.

NIV Acts 26:11 Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force

them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them.

NKJ Acts 26:11 "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.

NRS Acts 26:11 By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.

YLT Acts 26:11 and in every synagogue, often punishing them, I was constraining them to speak evil, being also exceedingly mad against them, I was also persecuting them even unto strange cities.

NAB Acts 26:11 Many times, in synagogue after synagogue, I punished them in an attempt to force them to blaspheme; I was so enraged against them that I pursued them even to foreign cities.

NJB Acts 26:11 I often went round the synagogues inflicting penalties, trying in this way to force them to renounce their faith; my fury against them was so extreme that I even pursued them into foreign cities.

GWN Acts 26:11 I even went to each synagogue, punished believers, and forced them to curse the name of Jesus. In my furious rage against them, I hunted them down in cities outside Jerusalem.

BBE Acts 26:11 And I gave them punishment frequently, in all the Synagogues, forcing them to say things against God; and burning with passion against them, I went after them even into far-away towns.

- **I punished.** Acts 22:19. Mt 10:17. Mk 13:9. Lu. 21:12.
- **force them to blaspheme** Acts 13:45; 18:6. Mk 3:28. Heb 10:28, 29. James 2:7.
- **being furiously enraged** . Acts 26:24, 25. Eccl 9:3. Lu. 6:11; 15:17. 2 Pe. 2:16.
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- Acts 26:19-21 His Compliance

### PAUL CONCLUDES HIS "BEFORE CHRIST" TESTIMONY

**Arnold** - Paul told Agrippa about his sincerity for the Jewish religion by his willingness to treat the Christians with cruelty, persecuting them by imprisonment and death. Paul was a true Jewish believer but he made the mistake of persecuting Christians in the name of God, for he only realized later that Christianity was the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises.

**Spurgeon** - Paul was a whole-hearted man; whatever he did, he did intensely; so that, when he did wrong, he did it with a kind of madness. Such a furious hatred of Jesus of Nazareth was upon him that all Judaea was not large enough for the indulgence of his persecuting malice against the saints, so he "persecuted them even unto strange cities."

**And as I punished them often in all the synagogues** - It is notable that at this early stage of Christianity, the Jewish believers were still attempting to worship in the Synagogues. This was a time of transition but persecution such as from Paul would expedite the Jewish Christians pulling away from their Synagogues.

**Punished** (5097)(**timoreo** from **timoros** = watching one's honor) To the early Greeks this word could mean "to help," to redress an injury, or to avenge or punish a wrong. **Robertson** adds "originally to render help, to succor, then to avenge (for honour)." The idea is that those punished would be suffering what they deserve. To take vengeance upon or to avenge and implies that a person is receiving the just consequences for misdeeds. It means to punish (inflict a penalty) in the present context of procuring a legal sanction against those who violate the law. In Classical Greek, this word group (verb timoreo and noun timoria) conveyed the idea of punishment was deeply colored by vindictiveness and was a punishment meant to satisfy a sense of outraged justice, the defense one's honor or that of a violated law.

**I tried to force them to blaspheme** - To recant their profession, to curse Christ and/or disown their faith. Notice that "**tried to**

**force"** is in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating that Paul tried over and over to get them to blaspheme. Luke does not tell us if he was successful in his attempts, and the verb suggests he probably was not (at least for those who were genuine believers).

**Robertson** comments that "The tense, like the imperfect in Matthew 3:14; Luke 1:59, leaves room to hope that Paul was not successful in this effort, for he had already said that he brought many "unto death" (Acts 22:4)."

**Tried to force (compel)** (315)([anagkazo](#) from [anagke](#) - compelling need requiring immediate action, a pressing situation) refers to an inner or an outward compulsion (coercion) for someone to act in a certain manner (Gal 2:3, 14, 6:12, Acts 26:11). Anagkazo was used in surgery of force to reduce dislocations, etc. (Liddell-Scott).

**Guzik** writes "Paul later speaks of the great regret he had over his prior life as a persecutor (1 Corinthians 15:9, 1 Timothy 1:15). Perhaps the fact that he compelled them to **blaspheme** weighed especially on his conscience."

**Blaspheme** (987)([blasphemeo](#) derived from **bláx** = sluggish, slow, stupid + **phémē** = rumor, fame) OR MORE LIKELY (derived from **bláptō** = to hurt, injure, harm + **phémē** from **phēmí** = to speak) means literally **to speak to harm** and in general therefore means to bring into ill repute and so to slander, to **defame** (to harm the reputation of by libel or slander), speak evil of, to **rail at** (revile or scold in harsh, insolent, or abusive language and rail stresses an unrestrained berating), to speak **calumny** (noun form = a misrepresentation intended to blacken another's reputation = the act of uttering false charges or misrepresentations maliciously calculated to damage another's reputation), to **calumniate** (verb form = to utter maliciously false statements, charges, or imputations about - calumniate imputes malice to the speaker and falsity to the assertions)

**Marshall** writes that "The best parallel to Paul's activity is provided at a later date by Pliny, the Roman governor of Bithynia, who tells us that he brought people suspected of being Christians before his court: 'Those who denied they were, or ever had been, Christians, who repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered invocation, with wine and frankincense, to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for that purpose, together with those of the gods, and who finally cursed Christ—none of which acts, it is said, those who are really Christians can be forced into performing—these I thought it proper to discharge' (Epistles 10:96). This account is written, of course, with reference to a pagan court, but a similar kind of procedure will have taken place in a Jewish setting." (Ibid)

**MacArthur** - If he could not kill them, he at least wanted to force them to recant. Viewing Christians as dangerous and blasphemous heretics caused Paul to be furiously enraged at them (cf. Acts 9:1; Gal. 1:13–14).

**And being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities**- Notice that what "filled" Paul (anger), also controlled him (pursued the Christians). How different was Paul now that he was filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit!

**Being furiously enraged** - This verb is used only here and gives us a striking picture of the intensity of Paul's emotional state regarding the Jews who had converted to Christianity. You can almost picture his nostrils flaring, neck veins bulging and face beet red! The picture is a person who is so enraged they appear to be out of their mind! It is amazing given the intrinsic meaning of *emmainomai* that Paul adds a modifying adverb (*perissos*) which means exceedingly, even beyond measure! I am not sure he could have painted a much more striking picture of his anger! As a physician, I can only imagine what his blood pressure was!

**Enraged** (1693)(*emmainomai* from **en** = in+ **maínomai** = to act as a maniac) means literally to be mad or furious with or against any person or thing, followed by the dat. (Acts 26:11). **Louw-Nida** - to be so furiously angry with someone as to be almost out of one's mind - 'to be enraged, to be infuriated, to be insanely angry.' BDAG - to be filled with such anger that one appears to be mad."

It is interesting that the one who forced the Christians to blaspheme later confessed he was the one who blasphemed writing "even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief." (1 Ti 1:13)

**Larkin** comments on **enraged** pursuit - Yet even such strong persecution was not outside the sovereign plan of God; and Jesus has promised such for all true disciples (Lk 12:4, 8-12+; Lk 21:12-19+).

**Pursuing** ([imperfect tense](#) = repeated attempts) (1377)([dioko](#)) means Paul was pressing hard after them, pursuing them with earnestness and diligence in order to punish them.

**Robertson** on **dioko** - The old verb *diōkō* was used to run after or chase game and then to chase enemies. The word **persecute** is the Latin *persequor*, to follow through or after. It is a vivid picture that Paul here paints of his success in hunting big game, a grand heresy hunt.

**Robertson** on **even to foreign cities** - We know of Damascus, and Paul evidently planned to go to other cities outside of Palestine and may even have done so before the fateful journey to Damascus.

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**Compulsory Blasphemy - C. H. Spurgeon** - I truly thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth....

You, perhaps, know what that means — compel them to blaspheme. The Roman way of doing it was to say, "Curse Christ." Often and often did the Roman Emperor command the martyrs to curse Christ, and you remember Polycarp's answer — "How can I curse Him? Sixty years have I known Him; He never did me a displeasure, and I cannot and I will not curse Him." Then the whip was applied, or the hand was held over burning coals, or the flesh was pinched with hot irons, and then the question was put again — "Will you curse Christ now?" Paul says that he, though probably using milder means, compelled the professor of Christ's faith to blaspheme. And there may be some such here — the husband who persecutes his wife for Christ's sake; the father who charges his child, upon his obedience, never to go to the sanctuary of the Lord again; the master who plagues his servant, mocks and jeers, and can never be content, except when he is saying hard things against him.

**Acts 26:12 "While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests,**

NET Acts 26:12 "While doing this very thing, as I was going to Damascus with authority and complete power from the chief priests,

GNT Acts 26:12 ν ο ς πορευ μενος ε ς τ ν Δαμασκ ν μετ ξουσ ας κα πιτροπ ς τ ς τ ν ρχιερ ων

NLT Acts 26:12 "One day I was on such a mission to Damascus, armed with the authority and commission of the leading priests.

KJV Acts 26:12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

ESV Acts 26:12 "In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests.

CSB Acts 26:12 "I was traveling to Damascus under these circumstances with authority and a commission from the chief priests.

NIV Acts 26:12 "On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests.

NKJ Acts 26:12 "While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

NRS Acts 26:12 "With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests,

YLT Acts 26:12 'In which things, also, going on to Damascus -- with authority and commission from the chief priests --

NAB Acts 26:12 "On one such occasion I was traveling to Damascus with the authorization and commission of the chief priests.

NJB Acts 26:12 'On such an expedition I was going to Damascus, armed with full powers and a commission from the chief priests,

GWN Acts 26:12 "I was carrying out these activities when I went to the city of Damascus. I had the power and authority of the chief priests.

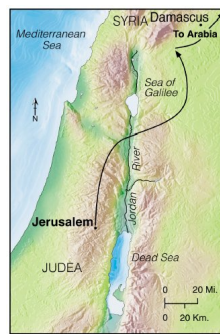
BBE Acts 26:12 Then, when I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and orders of the chief priests,

- **As I was journeying to Damascus** - Acts 9:1, 2; 22:5.
- with. Acts 26:10. 1 Ki. 21:8–10. Ps 94:20, 21. Isa 10:1. Jer 26:8; 29:26, 27. Jn 7:45–48; 11:57.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### **Paul Presents His Testimony to Agrippa - Acts 26:1-21**

- Acts 26:1-3 His Congeniality
- Acts 26:4-5 His Character
- Acts 26:6-8 His Confidence

- Acts 26:9-11 His Cruelty
- Acts 26:12-15 His Conversion
- Acts 26:16-18 His Commission
- Acts 26:19-21 His Compliance



## PAUL'S LIFE TRANSFORMING ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS

See [Map of Paul's conversion](#).

**While so engaged** - And I would add "while so enraged!"

**As I was journeying to Damascus** - Paul has just painted a picture of his violence against the Christians which would serve to make his conversion on the Damascus Road even that much more miraculous! This should have served to gain Agrippa's attention and convince him of the supernatural transformation that Saul had experienced.

Is this not ironic that the same group (chief priests) who gave him authority to persecute and kill Christians are now the very ones who wanted to carry that out on Paul! As we often say "Jesus changes everything," and here we see in more ways than one!

**With the authority and commission of the chief priests**- **Authority** is [exousia](#) which is the same word used in Acts 26:18 to describe Satan (dominion) who is given the "right and the might" over non-believers. One has to believe that Satan's "exousia" gave him the right to influence the Jewish chief priest and Paul filling them with intense hatred. Luke's use of both **exousia** (which by itself conveys authority) and **epitrope** serves to emphasize the sense of complete authority the chief priests had delegated to Saul.

**Marshall** adds that "Whereas the earlier accounts speak of 'letters', here Paul speaks of the authority and commission which the letters contained. In Acts 9:2+ ("asked for letters from him") the authority was gained from the high priest, but here it comes from the high priests, i.e. the leading priestly officials (Acts 9:14, 21+). (TNTC-Acts)

**UBS Handbook** adds that "The reference would be to a document indicating the authority given him by the High Priest."

**Commission** (only NT use) ([2011](#))(**epitrope** from **epi** = upon + **trope** = a turning) describes the permission, an office granted, full power or authorization to carry out a specific assignment, in this case to persecute those who believed in Jesus. It speaks of Paul having been delegated fully authority, and complete power.

**Robertson** adds that **epitrope** is "from **epitropos**, steward, and that from **epitrepō**, to turn over to, to commit).

**Gilbrant** on **epitrope** - A compound noun, **epitropē** is formed by the preposition **epi**, "upon, over," and **tropē**, "a turning" (which comes from the verb **trepō**, "to turn"). The verb **epitrepō** means "to turn to, transfer onto," hence "to entrust, commit" or "to allow, permit, give leave." Thus the noun carries the idea of "commission, permission, power, authority, guardianship." In the classics **epitropē** is often used of legal guardian and trusteeships and sometimes of the office of the Roman procurator. It occurs only once in the Septuagint (2 Maccabees 13:14) (Ibid)

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**What happened on the road to Damascus? What is a road to Damascus experience?**- The events that happened on the road to Damascus relate not only to the apostle [Paul](#), whose dramatic conversion occurred there, but they also provide a clear picture of the conversion of all people. While some have an extraordinarily dramatic conversion known as a "Damascus Road experience," the conversion of all believers follows a similar pattern of Paul's experience on the road to Damascus, described in Paul's own words in Acts 9:1-9; Acts 22:6-11; and Acts 26:9-20. Putting the three accounts together, the details of this amazing experience come together. Paul, who went by the name of [Saul](#) at that time, was on his way to Damascus with a letter from the high priest of the temple in Jerusalem giving him authority to arrest any who belonged to "the Way," meaning those who followed Christ. So intent was he on "opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9) that in "raging fury," he breathed "threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord." Here was a man who truly hated Christ and all who were associated with Him. Suddenly a bright light shone

on Saul, causing his entire party to fall to the ground. Then Jesus spoke to Saul, asking him, “Why are you persecuting me?” in a voice understood only by him. Saul recognized that this was a deity of some sort because he called Him “Lord” and asked who He was. When Jesus identified Himself as the very One Saul had been persecuting, one can only imagine the terror that filled Saul’s heart. Saul was speechless, no doubt thinking to himself, “I’m a dead man.” The Acts 22 version of the story indicates that Saul’s response was to ask what Jesus wanted him to do. The Acts 9 and Acts 22 retellings of the story have Saul saying Jesus told him to rise and go to Damascus where he would be told what to do. In the Acts 26 story, which is longer and more detailed, Saul describes Jesus’ commission of him as His messenger to the Gentiles (which must have amazed Saul, the ultimate Gentile-hating Pharisee), to turn many from darkness to the light and from the power of Satan to God. His message of forgiveness of sins and “a place among those who are sanctified by faith” must have also astonished Saul because the Jews were convinced they alone had the place of honor in God’s eyes. There is no discrepancy or contradiction among these three accounts. Even though Saul received his commission from Jesus on the road, he still had to go into Damascus and be told what to do—meet with Ananias who laid hands on him, receive the Holy Spirit, be baptized, and be received by the disciples there (Acts 9:15–16, 19; 22:12–16). At Damascus, he also went for three days without eating or drinking, and then received his sight, which had been taken from him on the road. The phrase “Damascus Road experience” is used to describe a conversion which is dramatic and startling. Many people receive Christ in a life-changing, instantaneous experience, although many others describe their conversion as more of a gradual understanding of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But both types of experiences have several things in common. First, salvation is of the Lord, by His will and according to His plan and purpose (Acts 22:14). As He does one way or another to each of us, Jesus made it clear to Saul that he had gone his own way for long enough. Now he was to become an instrument in the hands of the Master to do His will as He had foreordained it. Second, the response of both Saul and all those who are redeemed by Christ is the same: “What do you want me to do?” Like Saul, we do not bargain, negotiate, question, or come halfway. The response of the redeemed is obedience. When God truly touches our hearts, our only response can be, “Lord, may your will be done and may you use me to do it.” Such was the experience of Saul on the Damascus Road. Saul’s dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus was the beginning of an incredible journey. And while not all conversions are as startling as Saul’s, each of us is commissioned by Jesus to live in obedience to Him (John 14:15), love one another in His name (1 John 2:23), “know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,” (Philippians 3:10), and tell the world of the wonderful riches in Christ. ([Gotquestions](#))

## COMPARISON OF THREE VERSIONS OF PAUL'S CONVERSION

Acts 9+ Luke's Version of Saul's Conversion	Acts 22+ Paul's Defense before Jews at Temple	Acts 26+ Paul Trial before King Agrippa II in Caesarea
As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:3-4)	“But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me, and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’” (Acts 22:6-7+)	While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, 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. 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.’” (Acts 26:12-14+)

And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." (Acts 9:5)	"And I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.'" (Acts 22:8)	"And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.'" (Acts 26:15)
"But get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do." (Acts 9:6)	"And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.'" (Acts 22:10)	"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; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, 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.'" (Acts 26:16-18)
The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. (Acts 9:7)	"And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me." (Acts 22:9)	
Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. (Acts 9:8)	"But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus." (Acts 22:11)	

**Acts 26:13 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.**

NET Acts 26:13 about noon along the road, Your Majesty, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining everywhere around me and those traveling with me.

GNT Acts 26:13 μ ρας μ σης κατ τ ν ὁ ν ε ῶν, βασιλε , ο ραν θεν π ρ τ ν λαμπρ τητα το λ ου περιλ μψαν με φ ς κα το ς σ ν μο πορευομ νους.

NLT Acts 26:13 About noon, Your Majesty, as I was on the road, a light from heaven brighter than the sun shone down on me and my companions.

KJV Acts 26:13 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.

ESV Acts 26:13 At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me.

CSB Acts 26:13 King Agrippa, while on the road at midday, I saw a light from heaven brighter than the sun, shining around me and those traveling with me.

NIV Acts 26:13 About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun,

blazing around me and my companions.

NKJ Acts 26:13 "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.

NRS Acts 26:13 when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions.

YLT Acts 26:13 at mid-day, I saw in the way, O king, out of heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me a light -- and those going on with me;

NAB Acts 26:13 At midday, along the way, O king, I saw a light from the sky, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my traveling companions.

NJB Acts 26:13 and in the middle of the day as I was on my way, Your Majesty, I saw a light from heaven shining more brilliantly than the sun round me and my fellow-travellers.

GWN Acts 26:13 Your Majesty, at noon, while I was traveling, I saw a light that was brighter than the sun. The light came from the sky and shined around me and those who were with me.

BBE Acts 26:13 In the middle of the day, on the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining round me and those who were journeying with me.

- **mid-day**. Acts 9:3; 22:6.
- **above**. Isa 24:23; 30:26. Mt 17:2. Rev 1:16; 21:23.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

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The Conversion of Saint Paul, Luca Giordano, 1690

### HIGH NOON SHOWDOWN!

Larkin observes that "Here we meet not only the most telling evidence that Jesus is risen but also the clearest exposition of that resurrection's significance." (Ibid)

**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** - Paul traveling to arrest Christians is arrested by Christ and becomes a Christian. [Our God is an awesome God!](#)

This is the third mention of this amazing event in the book of Acts

Acts 9:3+ As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him;

Acts 22:6+ "But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me,

**Midday** - The sun would have been brightest and yet the Son, the Creator, outshone the sun He created!

**Shining all around** (4034)(**perilampo** from **peri** = around + **lampo** = to shine) literally means to shine around. It was not a flash. Shine implies it was present for some duration, certainly during the time the Risen Lord addressed Saul. **Perilampo** is used only here and when the angels announced the birth of Messiah (No uses in the Septuagint):

Luke 2:9+ And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord **shone around** them; and they were terribly frightened.

**A light....shining...and those who were journeying with me** - All the traveling party saw the light but only Saul saw the Lord! All heard a sound but only Saul understood the words. They all fell to the earth, but only Paul remained on the ground (Acts 9:7 "The men who traveled with him **stood** speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.").

**Wiersbe** - Paul considered himself an enlightened man; for, after all, he was a Jew (Rom. 9:4–5), a scholar (Acts 22:3), and a Pharisee. In reality, Paul had lived in gross spiritual darkness. He knew the Law in his pre-conversion days, but he had not realized that the purpose of the Law was to bring him to Christ (Gal. 3:24). He had been a self-righteous Pharisee who needed to discover that his good works and respectable character could never save him and take him to heaven (Phil. 3:1–11). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Larkin** - it was an objective experience in space and time, for the companions heard a voice, though not the message. They saw a light, though not Jesus (Acts 9:7; 22:9). Light is appropriate to the theophany of the heavenly risen Lord in his divine mode of being (Ex 20:18; Deut 4:12; Is 60:1-3; O'Toole 1978:63). It is a fitting metaphor for the revelation and salvation he brings (Is 42:6; 49:6; Lk 2:32; Acts 26:18, 23; Krodel 1986:461). Our Lord's dealing with Paul here teaches us that to get the attention of those who are self-confident enough in their religion to persecute others, **God may take extraordinary steps to literally bring them to their knees** (Ibid) (**ED**: I can vouch for that because I ran from Him for 39 years! See [My Personal Testimony of God's Grace](#).)

**David Jeremiah** adds that "It's easy for us to believe that because our personal testimony is nowhere near as dramatic as Paul's that it is not worth sharing. But note what makes Paul's testimony so interesting: the fact that he was totally on the other side from Christ. He was a persecutor of Christ and His church. But isn't that true of everyone who becomes a Christian? Weren't we dead in our trespasses and sins, enemies of God. Yes, we were. We may not have gone around persecuting Christians, but we were friends of the world, not God. So for anyone to go from being the enemy of God to the friend of God through conversion to Christ is a dramatic testimony, regardless of how it happened. Therefore, any testimony that is true and told from a biblical point of view is a dramatic store of role-reversal that is supernatural to the core. And it is a story—your story—that should be told."

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Three times the conversion of Paul is recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Each time special emphasis is placed on the light

### **I. The Brightest Light**

There is no doubt about that. The text tells us it was brighter than the sun. Note the words "above the brightness of the sun". Is, this possible? Is light above and beyond the sun a fake or a fiction? It is a fact. Just the same way that there was light without the sun on the first three days of creation. This bright light was seen in the world before it shone on Paul. In Eden it shone keeping the way to the tree of life. For Abraham it was a burning lamp amidst the sacrifices. For Moses it was a flaming bush. At the tabernacle it was the abiding cloud and fire. In the temple it was a glory before which the priests could not stand. For Paul it was a light brighter than the sun. For us, like John, it is the fact that—"He was a burning and a shining light" John 5:35

### **II. The Blinding Light**

To those whose eyes desire only to behold vanity it is a blinding light. Paul rose up and opened his eyes but he could not see. He was blinded to all that he had before lived for and worked for. His greatest desires were now in darkness. He could no longer see them. After three days Paul came out of his darkness into light. He received new sight and from that day he saw everything differently. He had seen the Saviour and now he saw the Scriptures as they really are, testifying of Christ. What preaching he did in Damascus as a result!

### **III The Best Light**

Paul had seen the best light and to the end of his earthly pilgrimage he followed the gleam. It led him to the martyr's death but also to the martyr's dazzling crown. Hence his continual cry, "That I might know Him". Have you experienced the brightest, blinding and best light? Are you following its gleam? If so, you can rejoice. If not, you are heading for the blackness of darkness forever.

**Acts 26:14 "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.**"**

Amplified - And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice in the Hebrew tongue saying to me, Saul, Saul, why do you continue to persecute Me [to harass and trouble and molest Me]? It is dangerous *and* turns out badly for you to keep kicking against the goads [to keep offering vain and perilous resistance].

NET Acts 26:14 When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul,



why are you persecuting me? You are hurting yourself by kicking against the goads.'

GNT Acts 26:14 π τω ν τε κα τα πε σ ν τω ν μ ν ε ς τ ν γ ν κου σα φων ν λ γου σαν πρ ς με τ βρα δι δια λ κτ ,  
Σαο λ Σαο λ, τ με δι κει ς; σκλη ρ ν σοι πρ ς κ ν τρ α λα κτ ζει ν.

NLT Acts 26:14 We all fell down, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is useless for you to fight against my will. '

KJV Acts 26:14 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.

ESV Acts 26:14 And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

CSB Acts 26:14 We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice speaking to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

NIV Acts 26:14 We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

NKJ Acts 26:14 "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.'

NRS Acts 26:14 When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.'

YLT Acts 26:14 and we all having fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew dialect, Saul, Saul, why me dost thou persecute? hard for thee against pricks to kick!

NAB Acts 26:14 We all fell to the ground and I heard a voice saying to me in Hebrew, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goad.'

NJB Acts 26:14 We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Hebrew, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you, kicking against the goad.

GWN Acts 26:14 All of us fell to the ground, and I heard a voice asking me in Hebrew, 'Saul, Saul! Why are you persecuting me? It's hard for a mortal like you to resist God.'

BBE Acts 26:14 And when we had all gone down on the earth, a voice came to me, saying in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why are you attacking me so cruelly? It is hard for you to go against the impulse which is driving you.

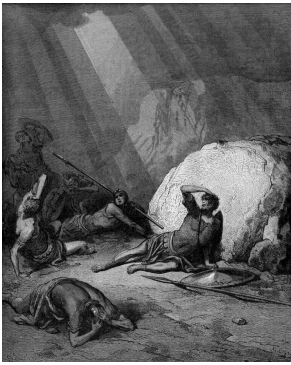
- **In the Hebrew dialect** - Acts 21:40; 22:2.
- **Saul**. Acts 9:4, 5; 22:7–9.
- **hard for you to kick against the goads**. Pr. 13:15. Zech 2:8; 12:2. 1 Co. 10:22.
- [C H Spurgeon - The Conversion of Saul of Taurus - Acts 26:14 - a sermon](#)
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## **A HAUGHTY MAN IS BROUGHT LOW**

**And when we had all fallen to the ground** - Saul had to be brought low before he could receive the Word and be exalted (cp James 1:21, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5)

Darrell Bock - Bock: All fell down, but only Saul heard the voice. Only this version notes that all fell to the ground. This shows that it was a real, external event, not merely an internal vision of Jesus. Only Saul, however, understood the exchange. (BECNT- Acts)

**Marshall** - Overwhelmed by the experience they all fell to the ground; contrast Acts 9:4 and Acts 22:7 where only Paul is said to fall to the ground. Nothing is said here about Paul being blinded by the light, which in any case did not apparently affect the sight of his companions. In this particular account all the attention is concentrated on what the Lord said to Paul, and therefore questions about his blindness and the reaction of his companions are not raised; there is in fact no conclusion to the story of the conversion (contrast Acts 9:7–9; Acts 22:11), and Paul goes straight on to record his response to the Lord's command (Acts 22:19). (TNTC-Acts)



Dore Woodcut

**I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect-** Paul would have been thinking "This Man knows our language."

**Hebrew** (1446) (**Hebrais**) refers to the Hebrew language; not that however in which the OT was written. Most observers interpret this as a reference to the lingua franca in Palestine which was the closely related Semitic language of **Aramaic**. It is unlikely that the Roman commander Claudius Lysias would have been able to fully understand what Paul was saying.

**Dialect** (language) (1258) (**dialektos** from **dialogomai** = to dispute, discourse, reason) usually refers to the specific **dialect** of a region or special district within a nation, speaking of the the form of speech characteristic of a nation or region (I am from Texas and have a definite Texas twang or "dialect").

**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?** How could Paul be persecuting Jesus who was not present on earth? It was because he was persecuting those who were in covenant with Jesus and thus to persecute them was tantamount to persecuting Jesus. In short when we enter into the New Covenant by grace through faith we enter into a supernatural union and oneness with Jesus. See the [studies below](#) on covenant that emphasize this vitally important principle. One practical application to understand is that if you are persecuted for the sake of Jesus, you do not need to try to take revenge. You have a "Covenant Defender" (see especially [The Exchange of Armor and Belts](#)) Who will come to your defense and vindicate the wrong against you (either in this life or the life to come!)

**Guzik** comments that Jesus' words "emphasize: The personal appeal of Jesus (**Saul, Saul**). The misdirected nature of his persecution (**Me**). The folly of persecuting Jesus (**Why**).

**Persecuting** (**present tense** = continually) (1377) (**dioko** from **dio** = pursue, prosecute, persecute) means to follow or press hard after, literally to pursue as one does a fleeing enemy. It means to chase, harass, vex and pressure and was used for **chasing down criminals**. **Dioko** speaks of an intensity of effort leading to a pursue with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain. To go after with the desire of obtaining or in some contexts the desire to harm. It gives us the picture of going on the track of something like the hounds on the hunt and pursuing after the fox and implying a continuing effort to overtake, reach, or attain the goal.

**Dioko** in Acts - Acts 7:52; Acts 9:4; Acts 9:5; Acts 22:4; Acts 22:7; Acts 22:8; Acts 26:11; Acts 26:14; Acts 26:15

**Wiersbe** - Jesus Christ spoke to Paul in the familiar Aramaic tongue of the Jews, called him by name, and told him it was futile for him to continue fighting the Lord. In that moment, Paul had made two surprising discoveries: Jesus of Nazareth was alive, and He was so united to His people that their suffering was His suffering! Paul was persecuting not only the church, but also his own Messiah! How encouraging it is to know that God in His grace speaks to those who are His enemies. God had been dealing with Paul, but Paul had been resisting Him, kicking against the "goads." What were these "goads"? Certainly the testimony and death of Stephen (Acts 22:20), plus the faithful witness of the other saints who had suffered because of Paul. ([The Bible Exposition Commentary](#).)

**NET Note** - Sayings which contain the imagery used here (kicking against the goads) were also found in Greek writings; see Pindar, Pythians 2.94–96; Euripides, Bacchae 795.

**The goads** - The **goad** is a traditional farming implement, used to spur or guide live stock, usually oxen, which are pulling a plough or a cart; used also to round up cattle. It is a type of long stick with a pointed end, also known as the cattle prod. ([Wikipedia](#))

**It is hard for you to kick against the goads-** Jesus used this idiomatic phrase to symbolize Saul's stubborn resistance to Jesus and His message. We should not be too hard on Saul (Paul) for all of us from time to time rebel willfully against Jesus and in a similar way we too are kicking against the goads.

**Constable** - The figure of kicking against goads was and is a common rural metaphor that describes opposing the inevitable (like

"banging your head against a wall"). Such action only hurts the one doing it, not the object of his hostility. This was the case in Paul's antagonism to God that his persecution of Christians expressed.

**Marshall** - These words reflect a proverbial way of speaking, attested in several Classical Greek writers, and especially in Euripides, *Bacchae*, 794f., where Pentheus, the opponent of the cult of Dionysus, is warned: 'You are a mortal, he is a god. If I were you I would control my rage and sacrifice to him, rather than kick against the pricks.' But the proverb was also known in Judaism (Psalms of Solomon 16:4), and Philo spoke of how conscience stabs at a man (Decal. 87). Bruce thinks that the point here is that Paul was struggling against his conscience, but Hanson (p. 238) points out that in Greek literature the proverb refers to struggling against one's destiny; this seems the more likely interpretation. ([Acts Tyndale New Testament Commentary](#))

**Hard** (harsh, difficult) ([4642](#))([skleros](#) from **skéllo** = to harden, dry up; English = sclerosis) literally means hard, stiff, dried up, dry, severe. When referring to voices or sounds it means hoarse or harsh (Jn 6:60). When referring to things it means hard or tough. When referring to people, it conveys an inhuman character. "The word always conveys a grave reproach; it indicates a character harshly inhumane and uncivil" (Trench).

**Moody Bible Commentary** - The goads are spikes on a pole or plank that is used to train and control an ox or horse to pull a cart. The imagery implies that resistance against Jesus is painful and useless.

**Goad** ([2759](#))(**kentron** from **kenteo** = to prick, stimulate) means anything by which a puncture is made. A pointed stick used in driving draft animals. The sting of an animal. **Zodhiates** - "to kick against the pricks" or goads, meaning to offer vain and rash resistance which is a proverbial expression alluding to unruly oxen and applied to those who by unruly rage hurt themselves).

**Kentron** - goads(1), sting(2), stings(1). Acts 26:14; 1 Co. 15:55; 1 Co. 15:56; Rev. 9:10

(1 Co. 15:55) "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR **STING**?"

(1 Co. 15:56) The **sting** of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;

(Rev. 9:10) They have tails like scorpions, and **stings**; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months.

**Kentron** in Septuagint - Prov. 26:3; Hos. 5:12; Hos. 13:14;

**Gilbrant** - From the time of Homer this noun denoted a variety of things: "goad, any sharp point, spike, spur, instrument of torture, sting of a bee, sting of a scorpion, sting of an animal, point around which a circle is drawn," etc. It even is used in the metaphoric sense of something serving as an incentive, and it became part of the proverb "to kick against the goads." In the Septuagint *kentron* is used to translate the Hebrew words *methagh*, "bridle" (Proverbs 26:3), and *qōṭev*, "sting, prick" (Hosea 13:14). It is also used with no Hebrew counterpart in Sirach 38:25; Hosea 5:12; and 4 Maccabees 14:19. *Kentron* occurs five times in the New Testament. The Lord himself used it in a figurative sense when He reminded Saul of Tarsus of the difficulty involved in resisting the divine call to salvation and service (Acts 9:5). In his testimony before King Agrippa, Paul alluded to this aspect of the experience he received when he was gloriously converted and called into apostolic ministry (Acts 26:14). Paul used another figurative meaning for the term in the famous resurrection chapter of the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 15. There Paul alluded to the "sting" of death as disappearing for Christians at the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:55). In the next verse he specified that sin is the sting of death. That is to say, had sin never entered the human race, death never would have entered it. However, because Jesus dealt with the sin problem, He also conquered the sting of death. At the proper time the process will be complete for God's people. The apostle John utilized the same Greek word to describe one of the events which will occur during the Tribulation. Under the fifth trumpet judgment, God will loose demonic forces out of the abyss. They will be permitted to torment the earth's inhabitants for 5 months, but they will not be allowed to kill these people. John said the sting of these creatures will be like the sting of a scorpion (Revelation 9:10).

**Wikipedia** on [goad](#) - The **goad** is a traditional farming implement, used to spur or guide livestock, usually oxen, which are pulling a plough or a cart; used also to round up cattle. It is a type of long stick with a pointed end, also known as the [cattle prod](#).

**Spurgeon** - He was like a stubborn ox kicking against the goads; and the harder he kicked, the more the sharp points of the goads pricked him.

**William Larkin** has an interesting thought on the meaning of Paul's kicking against the goads - Did Ecclesiastes 12:11, "The words of the wise are like goads," come to his mind? To change the metaphor, the word of the Lord had kept growing and spreading like wildfire, especially in the time of persecution (Acts 8:3-4). Those who tried to stamp it out simply sent more sparks into the wind to ignite hearts in many more places. Paul learned, as does anyone who consistently says no to the faith, that it takes work to resist the

truth of the gospel and the life of the Spirit. ([Ibid](#))

**Paul Apple - Application:** When people offer resistance to our presentation of the gospel and treat us harshly because of our identification with Christ, they ultimately are persecuting Christ Himself. We should not take it personally but count it joy to fellowship in the sufferings of Christ.

#### Resources on covenant:

- [Lesson 2 Covenant: The Exchange of Robes](#)
  - [Lesson 3 Covenant: The Exchange of Armor and Belts](#)
  - [Lesson 4 Covenant: Solemn and Binding](#)
  - [Lesson 5 Covenant: A Walk Into Death](#)
  - [Lesson 6 Covenant: The Oneness of Covenant](#)
  - [Covenant: Oneness Notes](#)
  - [Lesson 7 Covenant: Withholding Nothing from God](#)
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#### Christ and Paul - C. H. Spurgeon. Acts 26:12-18

- Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,...

#### I. THE QUESTION.

**1. It was personal.** When I preach to you, I am obliged to address you all in the mass. But not so our Master. If He had spoken in general terms, it would have glanced off from the heart of the apostle; but when it came personally — "Why persecutest thou Me?" — there was no getting off it. I pray the Lord to make the question personal to some of you. There be many of us here present who have bad personal preaching to our souls. Do you not remember, dear brother in Christ, when you were first pricked in the heart, how personal the preacher was? I remember it well. It seemed to me that I was the only person in the whole place, as if a black wall were round about me, and I were shut in with the preacher, something like the prisoners at the Penitentiary, who each sit in their box and can see no one but the chaplain. I thought all he said was meant for me; I felt persuaded that someone knew my character, and had written to him and told him all, and that he had personally picked me out. Why, I thought he fixed his eyes on me; and I have reason to believe he did, but still he said he knew nothing about my ease. Oh, that men would hear the Word preached, and that God would so bless them in their hearing, that they might feel it to have a personal application to their own hearts.

**2. It contained some information as to the persecuted one.** If you had asked Saul who it was he persecuted, he would have said, "Some poor fishermen, that had been setting up an impostor." But see in what a different light Jesus Christ puts it. He does not say, "Why didst thou persecute Stephen?" but "Me?" Inasmuch as you have done this unto one of the least of My brethren, you have done it unto Me.

**3. It demanded an answer.** "What have I done to hurt thee? Why art thou so provoked against Me?"

#### II. THE EXPOSTULATION.

- "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

For —

**1. You do not really accomplish your purpose** When the ox kicks against the goad, it is to spite the husbandman for having goaded him onward; but instead of hurting the husbandman it hurts itself. If thou thinkest, O man, that thou canst stop the progress of Christ's Church, go thou and first bid the universe stand still! Go, stand by the winds, and bid them cease their wailing, or bid the roaring sea roll back when its tide is marching on the beach; and when thou hast stopped the universe, then come forth and stop the omnipotent progress of the Church of Christ. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh," etc. But put it as a personal matter, have you ever succeeded in stopping the work of grace in the heart of anyone? Aye, young man, you may laugh at your own shop mate, but he will beat you in the long run. If Christians are but faithful, they must win the day. It is no use your kicking against them; you cannot hurt them.

**2. You get no good by it.** Kick as he might, the ox was never benefited by it. Suppose you say you don't like religion, what have you ever got by hating it? You have got those red eyes sometimes on the Monday morning, after the drunkenness of the Sunday night. You have got that shattered constitution, which, even if you had now turned it to the paths of virtue, must hang about you till you leave it in your grave. But you are moral. Well, have you ever got anything even then by opposing Christ? Has it made your family any the happier? Has it made you any the happier yourself? Will it quiet your conscience when you come to die that you did your best to destroy the souls of other people?

**3. But kick as the ox might, it had to go forward at last.** If anyone had told Saul when he was going to Damascus, that he would one day become a preacher of Christianity, he would, no doubt, have laughed at it as nonsense; but the Lord had the key of his will, and He wound it up as He pleased. "Then why persecutest thou Me"? Perhaps you are despising the very Saviour you will one day love; trying to knock down the very thing that you wilt one day try to build up. Mayhap you are persecuting the men you will call your brothers and sisters. It is always well for a man not to go so far that he cannot go back respectably.

### III. THE GOOD NEWS.

Paul, who persecuted Christ, was forgiven. He says he was the very chief of sinners, but he obtained mercy. Nay, more, he obtained honour. He was made an honoured minister of Christ, and so may you.

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**What Does it mean to kick against the goads?** - "It is hard for you to kick against the pricks" was a Greek proverb, but it was also familiar to the Jews and anyone who made a living in agriculture. An [ox goad](#) was a stick with a pointed piece of iron on its tip used to prod the oxen when plowing. The farmer would prick the animal to steer it in the right direction. Sometimes the animal would rebel by kicking out at the prick, and this would result in the prick being driven even further into its flesh. In essence, the more an ox rebelled, the more it suffered. Thus, Jesus' words to Saul on the road to Damascus: "It is hard for you to kick against the pricks." Of the better-known Bible translations, the actual phrase "kick against the pricks" is found only in the King James Version. It is mentioned only twice, in Acts 9:5 and Acts 26:14. The apostle Paul (then known as Saul) was on his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians when he had a blinding encounter with Jesus. Luke records the event: "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" (Acts 26:14 KJV). Modern translations have changed the word *pricks* to *goads*. All translations except the KJV and NKJV, omit the phrase altogether from Acts 9:5. The conversion of Saul is quite significant as it was the turning point in his life. Paul later wrote nearly half of the books of the New Testament. Jesus took control of Paul and let him know his rebellion against God was a losing battle. Paul's actions were as senseless as an ox kicking "against the goads." Paul had passion and sincerity in his fight against Christianity, but he was not heading in the direction God wanted him to go. Jesus was going to goad ("direct" or "steer") Paul in the right direction. There is a powerful lesson in the ancient Greek proverb. We, too, find it hard to kick against the goads. Solomon wrote, "Stern discipline awaits him who leaves the path" (Proverbs 15:10). When we choose to disobey God, we become like the rebellious ox—driving the goad deeper and deeper. "The way of the unfaithful is hard" (Proverbs 13:15). How much better to heed God's voice, to listen to the pangs of conscience! By resisting God's authority we are only punishing ourselves. ([Gotquestions](#))

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**Oswald Chambers** - But it is hardly credible that one could so persecute Jesus!

Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? Acts 26:14.

Am I set on my own way for God? We are never free from this snare until we are brought into the experience of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. Obstinacy and self-will will always stab Jesus Christ. It may hurt no one else, but it wounds His Spirit. Whenever we are obstinate and self-willed and set upon our own ambitions, we are hurting Jesus. Every time we stand on our rights and insist that this is what we intend to do, we are persecuting Jesus. Whenever we stand on our dignity we systematically vex and grieve His Spirit; and when the knowledge comes home that it is Jesus Whom we have been persecuting all the time, it is the most crushing revelation there could be.

Is the word of God tremendously keen to me as I hand it on to you, or does my life give the lie to the things I profess to teach? I may teach sanctification and yet exhibit the spirit of Satan, the spirit that persecutes Jesus Christ. The Spirit of Jesus is conscious of one thing only—a perfect oneness with the Father, and He says "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." All I do ought to be founded on a perfect oneness with Him, not on a self-willed determination to be godly. This will mean that I can be easily put upon, easily over-reached, easily ignored; but if I submit to it for His sake, I prevent Jesus Christ being persecuted.



GNT Acts 26:15 γ δ ε πα, Τ ζ ε, κ ρ ι ε; δ κ ρ ι ο ς ε π ε ν, γ ε μ ι η σ ο ς ν σ δι κ ρ ι ε ς.

NLT Acts 26:15 " 'Who are you, lord?' I asked."And the Lord replied, 'I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting.

KJV Acts 26:15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

ESV Acts 26:15 And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.

CSB Acts 26:15 "Then I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' " "And the Lord replied: 'I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting.

NIV Acts 26:15 "Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' " 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied.

NKJ Acts 26:15 "So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

NRS Acts 26:15 I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The Lord answered, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.

YLT Acts 26:15 'And I said, Who art thou, Lord? and he said, I am Jesus whom thou dost persecute;

NAB Acts 26:15 And I said, 'Who are you, sir?' And the Lord replied, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.

NJB Acts 26:15 Then I said, "Who are you, Lord?" And the Lord answered, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

GWN Acts 26:15 "I asked, 'Who are you, sir?' "The Lord answered, 'I am Jesus, the one you're persecuting.

BBE Acts 26:15 And I said, Who are you, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom you are attacking.

- **I am.** Ex. 16:8. Mt 25:40, 45. Jn 15:20, 21.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## JESUS' REVEALED HIMSELF AND REPEATS THE REBUKE

**And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?'** - Paul would not know until it had been revealed to him. Spiritual truth must be spiritually revealed.

**THOUGHT** - "Who are You, Lord?" would be a good question for every person ever born to sincerely ask of Jesus? It resulted in the salvation of Saul who was miraculously transformed from Saul the greatest persecutor of Christ to Paul the greatest proclaimer of Christ. Have you ever really asked **"Who are you Lord?"**

**And the Lord said, 'I am (ego eimi) Jesus Whom you are persecuting'** - Don't miss the fact that Jesus' speaking to Saul is confirmation of the fact that He had been resurrected from the dead. Jesus was speaking, so clearly He was alive! And do you see what Paul is doing with his Jewish audience, most of whom knew about the crucifixion and perhaps a number had even been present on that fateful day? He is making sure that his Jewish audience knows that this Man that died on a Cross in Jerusalem is alive! In short he has just preached what **MacArthur** calls the *"shortest sermon in the NT on the resurrection!"* One can only imagine what was going through the thoughts of the Jews as they heard these words.

For just a moment put yourself in Saul's sandals and imagine you thoughts as you hear that the One you have been persecuting is the risen God! Yes, Saul had been struck by a bright light, but this revelation coming from Jesus in that light would have been like a "lightning bolt" or like a "dagger" cutting into Saul's heart! In a moment, you discover that all you have devoted your life to accomplish has been a total waste! Beloved, there are many successful, wealthy people who will one day have a similar experience, but sadly it will be too late for most because their discovery will come after they take their last breath! However, this principle applies to believers also -- Stop and ask yourself - What am I working for? For time or for eternity? For the earthly or the heavenly? For the material or the spiritual? For the profane or the profound? For what passes *away* or what lasts *always*? Perhaps you need a *"Damascus Road Revival,"* so that you might realign your life priorities while you still have time! Don't be a "Saul," instead be "Paul!"

Notice that Christ uses His earthly name **Jesus** which the angelic messenger had given to Joseph, Matthew recording "She (MARY) will bear a Son; and you shall call His name **Jesus**, for He will save His people from their sins (NOTICE HOW THIS LAST CLAUSE EXPLAINS THE MEANING OF HIS NAME!)." (Mt 1:21) **Jesus** was the Name that spoke of Christ's willing humiliation in emptying



Himself to become a Man (Php 2:5-10<sup>+</sup>). "He would show that now that He is in His glory He is not ashamed of His humiliation." (Matthew Henry)

**THOUGHT** - "There is nothing more effectual to awaken and humble the soul than to see sin to be against Christ, an affront to Him, and a contradiction to His designs." (Henry) Do you really comprehend that your sins are against God the Father, His Son and His Spirit (cp Eph 4:30<sup>+</sup>)? (cf Joseph's sensitive conscience in Ge 39:9)

**Longenecker** - Saul could not escape the fact that the Jesus whose followers he had been persecuting was alive, exalted, and in some manner to be associated with God the Father, whom Israel worshiped. He, therefore, had to revise his whole estimate of the life, teaching, and death of the Nazarene because God had beyond any question vindicated him. Thus he came to agree with the Christians that Jesus' death on the cross, rather than discrediting him as an impostor, fulfilled prophecy and was really God's provision for man's sin and that Jesus' resurrection confirmed him as being the nation's Messiah and mankind's Lord. (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

**Jesus** (2424)(**lesous**) is transliteration of the Greek **lesous**, which in turn is the transliteration of the Hebrew **Jehoshua** (**Yehoshua**) or **Jeshua** (**Yeshua**) both of which mean *Jehovah is help* or *Jehovah is salvation*. Stated another way the Greek **lesous** corresponds to the OT **Jehoshua** (**Yehoshua**) which is contracted as **Jeshua** (**Yeshua**). In the Gospels the single Name **Jesus** (**lesous**) is used as His personal Name some 538 times.

Imagine Saul's thoughts upon hearing those words "**I am Jesus!**" While we have no record that Saul ever saw or met Jesus during Jesus' earthly ministry, there is not doubt that he was well aware of the claim by His disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead. Now the fact that He is speaking to Saul indicates that Jesus was indeed alive and by implication had risen from the dead. Saul's systematic theology was turned upside down in a moment! However, one aspect of his theology was affirmed and that was his belief (which all Pharisees held) that there would be a resurrection! Jesus was alive!

**Jack Arnold** - Christ invaded Paul's life when he was not seeking Christ at all. The resurrected Christ supernaturally saved Paul, and this obviously explained to Agrippa why his behavior had changed so drastically and why he was so deeply committed to Jesus Christ. Paul could not get away from giving his testimony concerning his conversion to Christ. His testimony was given three times in the Book of Acts alone. He loved to tell about how Christ changed him from a religious, narrow-minded, bigoted Pharisee to a committed, warm-hearted and open Christian. Christ changed Paul's whole nature. The Bible says, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots" (Jer. 13:23)? The answer is "no," but God has the power to change these things. God can also change the nature of sinful men by conversion so as to make them new creatures in Christ with new desires for God. Only a supernatural conversion can turn a person around spiritually and that is exactly what happened to Paul. ([Sermon](#))

**Jesus** had alluded to the oneness between Jesus and His followers in Luke declaring

"The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me." (Luke 10:16<sup>+</sup>)

Paul clearly understood this concept of oneness between Jesus and His followers as indicated by his numerous allusions to unity with Christ in his epistles. Read Ro. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-16; 5:23-30; Col. 1:18-24; 2:19).

**THOUGHT** - You can mark it down that those who speak against **Christians** speak against **Christ**. Those who strike **Christians** strike **Christ**. Those who malign **Christians** malign **Christ**. Those who take advantage of **Christians** take advantage of **Christ**. This begs the question, even if you are a believer, have you ever done any of those things to another believer? Woe!

**Persecuting** (1377)(**dioko**) in the present tense describes Saul's continual ravaging of the disciples of Jesus and so continually persecuting Jesus!

**Dioko** in **Acts** - Acts 7:52; Acts 9:4; Acts 9:5; Acts 22:4; Acts 22:7; Acts 22:8; Acts 26:11; Acts 26:14; Acts 26:15

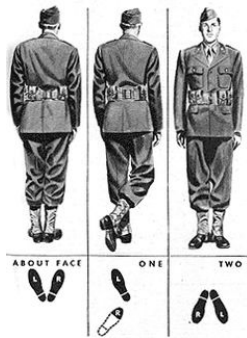
Paul later reiterated that before he was in Christ he was

"the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I **persecuted** (**dioko**) the church of God." (1 Cor 15:9<sup>+</sup>)

**Comment:** Watch Paul's "downward" progression = as Christ increases, he decreases (Jn 3:30<sup>+</sup>) - 1Co 15:9 [~55AD], Ep 3:8 [~61AD] and 1Ti 1:15 [~63-66AD]):

What a supernatural transformation the Gospel and the Spirit wrought who would later write to the saints in Rome...

"So then we **pursue** (**dioko** [present tense](#)) the things which make for peace and the building up of one another." (Ro 14:19<sup>+</sup>).



**About face!**

The very one who sought to tear down the Body of Christ, now sought to build up the Body of Christ! What an illustration of genuine repentance! This reminds me of the military command "**About face!**" Paul just heard his Commander's order "About face Paul!" The command "**About Face**" describes the act of pivoting 180 degrees, especially in a military formation (see diagram above). Another English definition says "about face" is "a reversal of direction, of attitude, behavior, or point of view." This is a good picture of the repentance that Jesus commands. In the opening of the Gospel of Mark John calls for repentance in Mk 1:4<sup>+</sup> and Jesus continues the call to repentance in Mark 1:15<sup>+</sup>.

Repentance is to leave  
The sins we loved before,  
And show that we in earnest grieve,  
By doing so no more.

Again Paul used **dioko** in this positive sense in his letter to the Philippians testifying

Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but **press on** (**dioko** in [present tense](#) = his daily practice, enabled by the Spirit) so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus....14 I press on (**dioko** in [present tense](#)) toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Paul's pursuit in Php 3:12, 14<sup>+</sup>!

The righteous God **pursued** the unrighteous **pursuer** and won him with the [Gospel](#). O, thank God for the transforming power of the glorious [Gospel](#)!

**A T Robertson** - Saul surrendered instantly as Thomas did (John 20:28) and as little Samuel (1 Sa 3:9). This surrender of the will to Christ was the conversion of Saul. He saw a real Person, the Risen Christ, to whom he surrendered his life. On this point he never wavered for a moment to the end.

Remember that to be [converted](#) means to be "turned around," so that Saul (and all believers) are "turned around by Christ" and face the opposite direction (a very similar picture is seen with repentance). Saul the Gospel persecutor because Paul the Gospel preacher. And just as the world was amazed at Saul's conversion, the lost world is always amazed (and often very disturbed) when someone they knew in the darkness, turns to the light (Jn 8:12, 2 Cor 4:6, Col 1:13, Acts 26:18) and begins to walk in the light (1 Jn 1:7). Has your conversion ruffled a few feathers in those who knew you when you were still in Adam before the Spirit placed you forever in Christ (2 Cor 5:17)?

**Jack Andrews** - Saul's encounter with Christ changed him forever. ([Sermon](#))

- He went from persecuting Christ to praising Christ.
- He went from plotting against Christians to preaching Christ.
- On the Damascus road he went from death to life;
- from bondage to liberty;
- from blindness to sight;
- from futility to forgiveness.

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**Oswald Chambers** - But it is hardly credible that one could be so positively ignorant!

Who art Thou, Lord? Acts 26:15.

"The Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand." There is no escape when Our Lord speaks. He always comes with an arrestment of the understanding. Has the voice of God come to you directly? If it has, you cannot mistake the intimate insistence with which it has spoken to you in the language you know best, not through your ears, but through your circumstances. God has to destroy our determined confidence in our own convictions. 'I know this is what I should do'—and suddenly the voice of God speaks in a way that overwhelms us by revealing the depths of our ignorance. We have shown our ignorance of Him in the very way we determined to serve Him. We serve Jesus in a spirit that is not His, we hurt Him by our advocacy for Him, we push His claims in the spirit of the devil. Our words sound all right, but our spirit is that of an enemy. "He rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." The spirit of Our Lord in an advocate of His is described in 1 Corinthians 13. Have I been persecuting Jesus by a zealous determination to serve Him in my own way? If I feel I have done my duty and yet have hurt Him in doing it, I may be sure it was not my duty, because it has not fostered the meek and quiet spirit, but the spirit of self-satisfaction. We imagine that whatever is unpleasant is our duty! Is that anything like the spirit of our Lord—"I delight to do Thy will, O My God."

**Acts 26:16 '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;**

NET Acts 26:16 But get up and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this reason, to designate you in advance as a servant and witness to the things you have seen and to the things in which I will appear to you.

GNT Acts 26:16 ἅλ· ν στηθι κα· στ θι π· το ς π· δας σου· ε ς το το γ ρ· φθην σοι, προχειρ· σασθα· σε πηρ την κα· μ ρτυρα ν τε ε· δ ς [με] ν τε· φθ σομα σοι,

NLT Acts 26:16 Now get to your feet! For I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant and witness. You are to tell the world what you have seen and what I will show you in the future.

KJV Acts 26:16 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;

ESV Acts 26:16 But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you,

CSB Acts 26:16 But get up and stand on your feet. For I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and a witness of what you have seen and of what I will reveal to you.

NIV Acts 26:16 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you.

NKJ Acts 26:16 `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.

NRS Acts 26:16 But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you.

YLT Acts 26:16 but rise, and stand upon thy feet, for for this I appeared to thee, to appoint thee an officer and a witness both of the things thou didst see, and of the things in which I will appear to thee,

NAB Acts 26:16 Get up now, and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness of what you have seen (of me) and what you will be shown.

NJB Acts 26:16 But get up and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this reason: to appoint you as my servant and as witness of this vision in which you have seen me, and of others in which I shall appear to you.

GWN Acts 26:16 Stand up! I have appeared to you for a reason. I'm appointing you to be a servant and witness of what you have seen and of what I will show you.

BBE Acts 26:16 But get up on your feet: for I have come to you for this purpose, to make you a servant and a witness of the things in which you have seen me, and of those in which you will see me;

- **get up.** Acts 9:6–9; 22:10.
- **to appoint you** . Acts 9:15, 16; 13:1–4; 22:14, 15.

- **minister.** Acts 1:17, 25; 6:4; 20:24; 21:19. Ro. 1:5; 15:16. 2 Co. 4:1; 5:18. Ep. 3:7, 8. Col. 1:7, 23, 25. 1 Th. 3:2. 1 Ti. 1:12; 4:6. 2 Ti. 4:5.
- **but also to the things in which I will appear to you** Acts 18:9, 10; 22:17–21; 23:11; 27:23, 24. 2 Co. 12:1–7. Gal 1:12; 2:2.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [See Map of Events Associated with Saul's conversion and ministry](#) (Do not copy - copyrighted by Holman)
- [Watch video of Paul's arrest and speech before the crowd](#) (based on Acts 22)
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## PAUL'S APPOINTMENT TO MINISTER AND WITNESS

So in Acts 26:15 Saul asked "Who are You Lord? but in this version Paul leaves out that he asked another question (always a good one for followers of Christ to ask) "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22:10+).

**But get up and stand on your feet** - - Both commands in the [aorist imperative](#) (as are the verbs below that are in **red**). This is like a military commander (Jesus "Captain of the Hosts") issuing wartime commands to his division leaders (like apostle Paul would soon be). The old "Nike Commercial" which said "Just Do It!" accurately describes the sense of these commands in aorist tense. Do this now! Don't delay! Here are Luke's two previous versions of Saul's Jesus encounter...

And the Lord said to me, '**Get up** and **go** on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.' (Acts 22:10+)

**Comment** - **Appointed** is the verb [tasso](#) which is translated by **BDAG** as "concerning everything that you **have been ordered** to do." The **NET** version has "everything that you have been designated to do," and adds the note that "designated" could be rendered "assigned." **Tasso** is in the [perfect tense](#) which pictures a past completed action with present ongoing effect or result. In other words, this tense depicts the appointment as Paul's standing order so to speak. It was given to him by Jesus and it was to remain in effect all the days of his life.

But **get up** and **enter** the city, and it will be told you what you must do." (Acts 9:6+)

**Comment** - Note the verb **must** is [dei](#) ([present tense](#)) which speaks of an obligation or necessity. These things are not optional, but mandatory.

**For this purpose** - a minister (an "under-rower" - see below) and a witness.

**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** - Jesus is recorded as appearing to Paul on several other occasions - cf. Acts 18:9, 10+; Acts 22:17–21+; Acts 23:11+; 2 Cor. 12:1–7; Gal. 1:11–12+, cp 2 Ti 4:17+ = "the Lord stood with me")

Jesus spoke to **Ananias** in Acts 9:15-16 explaining His purpose for Paul

But the Lord said to him, '**Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My Name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake.**'

**Wiersbe** - The word **minister** in Acts 26:16 means "an under-rower" and refers to a lowly servant on a galley ship. Paul had been accustomed to being an honored leader, but after his conversion he became a subordinate worker; and Jesus Christ became his Master. The Lord had promised to be with Paul and protect him; and He also promised to reveal Himself to him. Paul saw the Lord on the Damascus road, and again three years later while in the temple (Acts 22:17–21). Later, the Lord appeared to him in Corinth (Acts 18:9) and in Jerusalem (Acts 23:11), and He would appear to him again. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**NET Note on a minister and a witness** - The commission is similar to Acts 1:8+ and Luke 1:2+. Paul was now an "eyewitness" of the Lord.

**Larkin** on Jesus' choice of **huperetes** - With this term for "assistant" Jesus stresses that Paul is to do exactly his master's bidding (Lk 1:2+; Lk 4:20+; Acts 13:5+)

**Minister** (5257) ([huperetes](#) from **hupo** = under, beneath + **eretes** = a rower) is literally an under oarsman and then a subordinate, a servant, an attendant (Lk 4:20+), one who is in the service of another or an assistant in general. **Huperetes** describes a helper who willingly submits himself to carrying out the will of the one over him. In John 7:32, 45, 46+ it is used of the Temple "police" or guards. The subordinate official who waits to accomplish the commands of his superior. In Classic Greek **huperetes** was a common sailor, distinguished from a **nautes** (3492), a seaman, sailor. These were the men down in the ship's, doing one thing -- rowing and with their eyes on one man, the man standing at the front of the hull, shouting "*Row, Row, Row!*" **Servants of the word** describes

these men as focused on the word, listening and acting according to the word. "They not only had personal knowledge of the facts but also practical experience of the facts." (Plummer)

**Wiersbe** - The one word that best summarizes Paul's life and ministry is "**witnessing**" (see Acts 26:16). He simply shared with others what he had learned and experienced as a follower of Jesus Christ. His message was not something he manufactured, for it was based solidly on the Old Testament Scriptures...The Lord has a special work for Saul to do. The Hebrew of Hebrews would become the apostle to the Gentiles; the persecutor would become the preacher; and the legalistic Pharisee would become the great proclaimer of the grace of God." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Witness** (noun) (3144)(**martus/martys**) basically describes one who remembers something and testifies concerning what they remember. Notice that **martus** has a two fold meaning of (1) describing one who has seen and/or experienced something or someone and (2) one who testifies to what he or she saw. The testimony could be in a legal setting (Mk 14:63; Acts 6:13; 7:58; Heb. 10:28) or in the general sense of recounting firsthand knowledge (Lk 11:48; 1Ti. 6:12; Heb 12:1; 1Pe 5:1).

**Martus in Acts** - Acts 1:8; Acts 1:22; Acts 2:32; Acts 3:15; Acts 5:32; Acts 6:13; Acts 7:58; Acts 10:39; Acts 10:41; Acts 13:31; Acts 22:15; Acts 22:20; Acts 26:16

A **martus** is one who attests to a fact or event, one who gives evidence (testifies in a court to the truth of a fact or event), one who has seen or has personal knowledge of something or someone, especially as an "eye witness" (eg, the apostles in Acts having and relating their personal knowledge of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances). A witness is one who furnishes evidence or proof, confirming the truth by verbal testimony.

And so in this passage we see that Jesus is alluding to Paul's divine call and commission. The implication is that everything he was to do had been "pre-planned" by God. While believers of course do not have a divine commission exactly like Paul (who was an apostle), we do have a "pre-planned" appointment

"For we are His workmanship ([poiema](#) = masterpiece) , created in Christ Jesus for good works, which **God prepared beforehand** so that we would walk in them." (Eph 2:10+).

**THOUGHT** - This truth of God's previously prepared plan for every believer's life begs the question - Am I walking in His plan? Am I engaged in carrying out His "**good works**" or my "**works**" which are ultimately not good? Jesus gave us the pattern for "**good works**" in John 15:5 declaring "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, **he bears much fruit**, for apart from Me you can do (ABSOLUTELY) nothing." (Read also 1 Cor 3:11-15) See related discussions of [Good Works](#) and [Believers as God's Masterpiece, His Poiema](#)

God pre-planning of His children's steps reminds me of Proverbs...

Proverbs 16:9 "The mind (Literally = "heart" = the "control center") of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps (**Ed**: One step after another which is why we need to obey at each step! Play Rich Mullins' [Sometimes by Step](#))."

**Comment** - What does this proverb teach? It says that only the plans that are laid out and approved by God will succeed (at least in regard to eternal value). This emphasizes God's sovereignty in our lives.

Proverbs 20:24 "Man's steps (NLT = "the road we travel") are [ordained] (Lxx = euthuno = caused to be straight, a ship steered on course = Jas 3:4) by the LORD, How then can man understand his way? "

**Gleason Archer** spoke of the mysterious juxtaposition of sovereignty and free will writing that "God purposefully pre-sets all the physical 'scenes of life' – and keeps all of our choices free (undetermined), i.e. none are required by the Lord."

**THOUGHT** - O how wonderful when we seek His will for our life and learn to walk by the Spirit in His will, for then as Jesus promised we will bear much fruit. We would be wise to imitate the apostle Paul (1 Cor 11:1+ See [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)) who continually sought God's will, not his own (Read Acts 18:21, Acts 21:14, Ro 1:10, Ro 15:32, 1 Cor 4:19). **Brian Harbour** said, "Paul discovered Christ not only wanted to save him from something, but He also wanted to save him for something... We need to realize that as a Christian there are gifts that God has given us, and He expects us to use those gifts in performing a ministry for Him."

**Ray Stedman** makes some observations on **get up...I have appeared to you to appoint you a minister and a witness** noting that this "indicates a tremendous reversal of this man's whole approach to life. He is now experiencing the lifestyle which belongs to a Christian. "You are not your own; you are bought with a price. You will be told what to do." That is what conversion is: It is a change from thinking that you can run your own life, to an acknowledgment that God holds the program in his hands, and he has the right to

tell you what to do. This was the first thing Paul experienced when he became a Christian, this right of Jesus Christ to be **Lord**, and to tell him what he was to do. Conversion is a revolutionary change of government resulting in a radical change in behavior. That is what happened to Paul. He was put on a wholly different lifestyle. He was told to go into the city. Now he would no longer be giving the orders. He would no longer be directing men and sending them where he wanted them to go and doing what he wanted to do, but he would be told what he was to do." ([Beloved Enemy](#))

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### **Oswald Chambers - The overmastering direction**

I have appeared unto thee for this purpose. Acts 26:16.

The vision Paul had on the road to Damascus was no passing emotion, but a vision that had very clear and emphatic directions for him, and he says—"I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Our Lord said, in effect, to Paul—"Your whole life is to be overmastered by Me; you are to have no end, no aim, and no purpose but Mine." 'I have chosen him.' When we are born again we all have visions, if we are spiritual at all, of what Jesus wants us to be, and the great thing is to learn not to be disobedient to the vision, not to say that it cannot be attained. It is not sufficient to know that God has redeemed the world, and to know that the Holy Spirit can make all that Jesus did effectual in me; I must have the basis of a personal relationship to Him. Paul was not given a message or a doctrine to proclaim, he was brought into a vivid, personal, overmastering relationship to Jesus Christ. Verse 16 is immensely commanding—"to make thee a minister and a witness." There is nothing there apart from the personal relationship. Paul was devoted to a Person not to a cause. He was absolutely Jesus Christ's; he saw nothing else; he lived for nothing else. "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

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**WHAT'S NEXT?"** Having just received the Lord Jesus as his Savior from sin, an enthusiastic young boy blurted out, "Now what do I do? What's next?" He had the right idea! Although nothing further had to be done to receive salvation, there was much more to do to serve God.

The Bible, in Ephesians 2:8-9, makes it crystal-clear that we are saved by grace through faith. We could never do anything to deserve salvation. The best we have to offer is not good enough to meet the Lord's holy standards. We experience forgiveness of sin, find peace with God, have the promise of heaven and become possessors of everlasting life by trusting the Lord Jesus and Him alone. It is impossible for anyone to earn these favors!

Following conversion, however, we should respond as that young boy and the apostle Paul did, "Now what do I do? What's next?" Immediately after stating that we are not saved by works, Ephesians 2 tells us, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10).

Find there's faith, then comes service. We believe to become Christians. We serve because we have been saved. That's what's next! - R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Oh, what can I give to the Master,  
The One who from sin set me free?  
I'll give Him a lifetime of service  
To thank Him for dying for me.  
- K. De Haan

We cannot work for salvation,  
but salvation is followed by works.

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### **Be a Witness - Bob Gass**

I have appeared unto thee ... to make thee a witness ... Delivering thee from the people. (Acts 26:16,17)

You're not called to be a judge, and you're not called to be a lawyer; you're called to be a witness to God's saving and keeping power in your life. Only talk about the God you've experienced! Tell people what He's done for you. Their God may be a distant deity who doesn't get involved. Or He may be angry with them because He's an auditor, and their books don't balance. When nine out of ten people don't go to church, there's got to be a reason. We've been called to be "salt and light," but if the light is not shining and the salt is not doing its job, how will they ever be reached and won? (See Matthew 5:13-14.)

Please notice what God said to Paul, for it's a key for you. He promised to "deliver him from the people" (Acts 26:17). Some of us need to be delivered from the people! Love them; lead them; lay down your life for them—but don't be afraid of them. If you're anointed, then your authority comes from God, not them. When you've heard clearly from Him, you can face anybody! When God fills you with His Spirit, you'll receive a new boldness. Look at Peter; a few days ago he was denying Jesus and running from a mere



girl; now he's preaching to multitudes and winning them to Christ. What happened? He was empowered by the Holy Spirit! TODAY GOD WANTS TO FILL YOU WITH HIS SPIRIT, TO SET YOU FREE FROM THE PEOPLE, AND MAKE YOU A WITNESS. WILL YOU LET HIM? (A Fresh Word for Today)

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## God's Work Upon Minister and Convert - C. H. Spurgeon. Acts 26:16-18

### I. A WORK WROUGHT BY GOD UPON THE MINISTER.

**1. Subjugation.** While a man is a rebel, the Lord does not appoint him an ambassador; while he is dead in sin, a preacher of the way of life. Paul was struck down; for if he had not fallen, he would not have known how to lift others up. He remained blind for three days; otherwise he would not have been qualified to deal with others in darkness. See what God does in His ministers to fit them for your conversion. In order to slay your sins the shaft has been polished. Each of the best locks made by our eminent locksmiths is unique, and each needs its own special key: so God fits certain men for reaching certain men.

**2. Encouragement.** "Rise, and stand upon thy feet." Men can hardly be very useful till they cease to be despondent, and become energetic and hopeful. I have noticed that those who do not believe that they will be successful seldom are so; but those who rise and stand upon their feet, and manfully expect that God will bless them, are not disappointed.

**3. Ordination.** And to this end he must see the Lord for himself. Our Lord's appearing —

(1) Makes him willing to be a servant, for that is the meaning of the word "minister." When the renewed mind beholds the Lord, it cries out, "What wilt Thou have me to do?"

(2) Qualifies him to act as a witness. We cannot bear witness to that which we have never seen. Hearsay is of small value. Heads are won by reasoning, but hearts are won by witness bearing.

**4. Continuous instruction.** He is to be a witness not only of those things which he has seen, but also of those things in the which the Lord will yet appear unto him.

**5. Constant preservation.** "Delivering thee from the people," etc. Paul's life was always in danger, and yet never in real peril, for the Lord was his keeper. So shall every true servant of Christ be kept as with a garrison from all evil.

### II. THE WORK WROUGHT IN THE HEARER.

**1. Illumination:** the Lord sends His servant "to open their eyes." Men are born blind, and continue blind till, by the power of Jesus, sight is given to them. Your education and surroundings have perhaps placed a film of prejudice over your eyes; if a candid, childlike spirit were given you, you would see. Or possibly some favourite sin is like a cataract upon the eye of your conscience, and you cannot see the evil of sin or the beauty of holiness. Or it may be that unbelief darkens your soul.

**2. Conversion:** "to turn them from darkness to light." What a blessed turning is that which makes us face truth, and goodness, and God, and heaven; and leave ignorance, sin, and hell behind.

**3. Translation.** As the soul is brought into a new element, so is it also brought under a new government. "From the power of Satan unto God." Somebody says, "I do not understand how this can be performed in a minute." Well, two men are fighting, and we beg them to leave off. Do you recommend them to leave off gradually? If anybody held a pistol at my head, I should not say, "Take it away by degrees." Changes of mind such as are necessary to conversion had need be quick when sin is to be forsaken, for every moment deepens the guilt. It may seem a very gradual process by which a man who was dead comes to life; but for certain there is a point at which he left the dead and became alive, and that point God sees very clearly, even though we do not.

**4. Complete forgiveness.** The same moment that we receive Christ, we "receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified." What a blessing to become an heir of God! To what choice company is a sinner introduced when he believes in Jesus! He is a freeholder among the burgesses of the New Jerusalem.

**5. And all this has for its certificate and mark of genuineness these words — "By faith that is in Me."** The whole process of salvation is by faith.

### III. A WORK WHICH MUST BE DONE BY THE HEARER HIMSELF.

This text speaks of Paul being an instrument in the hands of God of opening men's eyes, etc., and they seem to be passive; but now they are called upon to be active. We are created thinking, intelligent beings, and we are saved as such. Never let us forget either the free agency of man or the purposes of God. Grace reigns not over slaves, but over obedient children.

**1. You must repent.** It is not the work of God the Holy Ghost to repent for you, but to lead you to repent.

**2. You must turn to God.** Your prayer may be, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned"; but the command is, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" God will turn you, but you have willingly to yield, and thus turn yourself.

**3. You must do works meet for repentance;** for wherever there is true faith there will be corresponding works, such as these: restitution if you have wronged anyone, reconciliation if you are at enmity with anyone, acknowledgment if you have spoken falsely, giving up of evil habits, and an earnest endeavor to be pure and holy.

#### Acts 26:17 rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you,

Amplified - Choosing you out [selecting you for Myself] *and* delivering you from among this [Jewish] people and the Gentiles to whom I am sending you— (cp Ezekiel 2:3)

NET Acts 26:17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you

GNT Acts 26:17 ξαίρω μεν ς σε κ το λαο κα κ τ ν θν ν ε ς ο ς γ ποστ λλω σε

NLT Acts 26:17 And I will rescue you from both your own people and the Gentiles. Yes, I am sending you to the Gentiles

KJV Acts 26:17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

ESV Acts 26:17 delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles-- to whom I am sending you

CSB Acts 26:17 I will rescue you from the people and from the Gentiles. I now send you to them

NIV Acts 26:17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them

NKJ Acts 26:17 `I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you,

NRS Acts 26:17 I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles-- to whom I am sending you

YLT Acts 26:17 delivering thee from the people, and the nations, to whom now I send thee,

NAB Acts 26:17 I shall deliver you from this people and from the Gentiles to whom I send you,

NJB Acts 26:17 I shall rescue you from the people and from the nations to whom I send you

GWN Acts 26:17 I will rescue you from the Jewish people and from the non-Jewish people to whom I am sending you.

BBE Acts 26:17 And I will keep you safe from the people, and from the Gentiles, to whom I send you,

- **Rescuing** - Acts 9:23–25, 29, 30; 13:50; 14:5, 6, 19, 20; 16:39; 17:10, 14; 18:10, 12–16; 19:28, Acts 21:28–36; 22:21, 22; 23:10–24; 25:3, 9–11; 27:42–44. Ps 34:19; 37:32, 33. 2 Co. 1:8–10; 4:8–10; 11:23–26. 2 Ti. 3:11; 4:16, 17.
- **Gentiles.** Acts 9:15; 22:21; 28:28. Ro. 11:13; 15:16. Gal 2:9. Ep. 3:7, 8. 1 Ti. 2:7. 2 Ti. 1:11; 4:17.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

### GOD'S RESCUE MISSION FOR HIS MISSIONARY PAUL

**Rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you-** Jesus commissions Paul to be an apostle for missions. Recall that in order for one to be an official apostle of Jesus in the NT, they had to have been an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:21–22), and Paul was (cf. 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8).

**Rescuing** (delivering) ([1807](#))([exaireo](#) from **ek** = out + **hairéo** = choose, elect, take) means to rescue or set someone free from

danger - Paul had been in danger of being killed several times by the Jews (Acts 9:22, 23, 24+, Acts 9:28, 29+, Acts 21:31+, Acts 23:12-15+, Acts 25:3+) and even by the Gentiles ([egged on](#) by the Jews) had tried to kill him at Lystra (Acts 14:19, 20+). Delivering, plucking out, drawing out, rescuing, which is what Jesus did for all of us giving "Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father." (Gal 1:4+) Luke used this word to describe God's rescue of Israel from Egyptian bondage (Acts 7:34), of God's angel rescuing Peter from the jail and the hand of Herod (Acts 12:11+), and of the Roman Claudius Lysius rescuing Paul from the Jews who were about to kill him (Acts 23:27+).

**Exaireo** in NT - Matt. 5:29; Matt. 18:9; Acts 7:10; Acts 7:34; Acts 12:11; Acts 23:27; Acts 26:17; Gal. 1:4

**Marshall** points out that "The account of Paul's call is similar to that of the prophets of Israel (cf. Ezek. 2:1), and God's promise of protection to him also has Old Testament echoes (Jer. 1:8; 1 Chr. 16:35). (Ibid)

**Larkin** on Gentiles to **whom I am sending you** - The direct Gentile mission, so offensive to his fellow Jews, is so necessary in God's saving plan that it is even part of the gospel message (Lk 24:46-47+ where "all the nations" is equivalent to "Gentiles"). It must ever determine the target audience of Paul's mission and ever be the flash point of opposition to it (Acts 9:15+; Acts 13:46-50+; Acts 22:15, 21-22+). All who will answer Christ's call to be witnesses will face the challenge of responding with courage and confidence. ([Ibid](#))

**I am sending** ([present tense](#)) ([649](#)) ([apostello](#) from **apo** = from, away from + **stello** = to withdraw from, avoid) means to send off, to send forth. To send out or commission as a representative or ambassador. The idea is to send forth from one place to another - Paul was going in place of Jesus and the same principle applies to all saints today for we are all to be "ambassadors for Christ." (2 Cor 5:20+) But the meaning of **apostello** is more than just to send because it means "to send off on a commission to do something as one's personal representative, with credentials furnished" ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

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## TODAY IN THE WORD

I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light. - Acts 26:17-18

In Sumerian mythology, the hero Gilgamesh went to the island of Dilmun in search of eternal life. In 1953, archaeologist T. Geoffrey Bibby discovered the historical reality. Dilmun turned out to be a 4,000-year-old city buried under the current city of Manama, the capital of Bahrain, an island state off the coast of Saudi Arabia. Dilmun had been a rich, independent trading center strategically located between the Middle East and India. Despite these advantages, it still could not offer eternal life. In order to truly find eternal life, there is only one Way—Jesus Christ. At this point, Paul was still in prison on vague charges stemming from the incident we read about yesterday. A new governor, Festus, had just arrived and was trying to figure out what to do with his mysterious prisoner. He scheduled a special hearing so King Agrippa and Queen Bernice could hear the man and so he himself could try to understand enough to write a coherent report to Rome. The circumstances were different—a royal court instead of barracks steps—but one thing hadn't changed: Paul's enthusiasm to seize any and all opportunities to share the gospel. For the occasion, his style was more formal, but this testimony follows a similar arc that we saw yesterday. Because Agrippa understood Jewish culture, Paul described his background as a model Jew, explained how through the prophets God had promised the Messiah, and again was painfully honest about his early, hate-filled opposition to Christ. He told his dramatic Damascus road experience, but telescoped the story in order to dwell more on the change itself (vv. 16-18). His life of ministry proved his personal integrity, as he emphasized his obedience, consistency in life and message, and dependence on God. The Resurrection was the stumbling block to his listeners, though—Festus found it insane and Agrippa could not accept the concept. Two powerful testimonies ... and yet not a single convert. We can take encouragement from this—we don't measure success through the number of converts but from our faithful willingness to share the gospel.

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** Having seen several examples of Paul's testimony, given in various circumstances to various audiences, begin crafting a version of your own personal testimony. Choose an audience—perhaps a neighbor, co-worker, or extended family member—and consider how to present the gospel and the way you came to faith in a way that this person can understand clearly and might find attractive. Work on your testimony whenever you can, and later this month share it with the person you chose.

**Acts 26:18 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.'**

NET Acts 26:18 to open their eyes so that they turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

GNT Acts 26:18 νο ξαι φθαλμο ς α τ ν, το πιστρ ψαι π σκ τους ε ς φ ς κα τ ς ξου ς α ς το Σαταν π τ ν θε ν, το λαβε ν α το ς φεσιν μαρτι ν κα κλ ρον ν το ς γι α σ μ νοι ς π στει τ ε ς μ .

NLT Acts 26:18 to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God's people, who are set apart by faith in me.'

KJV Acts 26:18 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.

ESV Acts 26:18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

CSB Acts 26:18 to open their eyes so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that by faith in Me they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified.'

NIV Acts 26:18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

NKJ Acts 26:18 `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.'

NRS Acts 26:18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

YLT Acts 26:18 to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the authority of the Adversary unto God, for their receiving forgiveness of sins, and a lot among those having been sanctified, by faith that is toward me.

NAB Acts 26:18 to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may obtain forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been consecrated by faith in me.'

NJB Acts 26:18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light, from the dominion of Satan to God, and receive, through faith in me, forgiveness of their sins and a share in the inheritance of the sanctified."

GWN Acts 26:18 You will open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light and from Satan's control to God's. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and a share among God's people who are made holy by believing in me.'

BBE Acts 26:18 To make their eyes open, turning them from the dark to the light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may have forgiveness of sins and a heritage among those who are made holy by faith in me.

- **open their eyes.** Acts 9:17, 18. Ps 119:18; 146:8. Isa 29:18; 32:3; 35:5; 42:7; 43:8. Lu. 4:18; 24:45. Jn 9:39. 2 Co. 4:4, 6. Ep. 1:18.
- **so that they may turn.** Acts 26:23; Acts 13:47. Isa 9:2; 49:6; 60:1–3. Mal. 4:2. Mt 4:16; 6:22, 23. Lu. 1:79; 2:32. Jn 1:4–9; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35, 36. 2 Co. 4:6; 6:14. Ep. 1:18; 4:18; 5:8, 14. 1 Th. 5:4–8. 1 Pe. 2:9, 25. 1 Jn 2:8, 9.
- **from the power of Satan.** Isa 49:24, 25; 53:8–12. Lu. 11:21, 22. Col. 1:13. 2 Ti. 2:26. Heb 2:14, 15. 1 Jn 3:8; 5:19. 1 Pe. 2:9. Rev 20:2, 3.
- **that they may receive forgiveness.** Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38, 39. Ps 32:1, 2. Lu. 1:77; 24:47. Ro. 4:6–9. 1 Co. 6:10, 11. Ep. 1:7. Col. 1:14. 1 Jn 1:9; 2:12.
- **and an inheritance.** Acts 20:32. Ro. 8:17. Ep. 1:11, 14. Col. 1:12. Heb 9:15. James 2:5. 1 Pe. 1:4.
- **who have been sanctified.** Acts 20:32. Jn 17:17. 1 Co. 1:2, 30; 6:11. Titus 3:5, 6. Heb 10:10, 14. Jude 1. Rev 21:27.
- **by faith.** Acts 15:9. Jn 4:10, 14; 7:38, 39. Ro. 5:1, 2. Gal 2:20; 3:2, 14. Ep. 2:8. Heb 11:6.
- **Benjamin Warfield's sermon [The Summation of the Gospel - Acts 26:18](#)**
- **[Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#)** - 7 minutes
- **[Acts 26 Resources](#)** - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**Greek** - anoixai (AAN) opthalmous auton tou epistrepesai (AAN) apo skotous eis phos kai tes exousias tou Satana epi ton theon tou labein (AAN) autous aphesin hamartion kai kleron en tois hegiasmenois (RPPMPD) pistei th eis eme

**Amplified** - To open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may thus receive forgiveness *and* release from their sins and a place *and* portion among those who are consecrated *and* purified by faith in Me.

**My Loose Paraphrase** - To supernaturally open the eyes of our heart (circumcising our heart, giving us a new heart, a heart of flesh for a heart of stone) which enables us (by the power of the Spirit indwelling our new heart) to turn from spiritual darkness of Satan's kingdom to the glorious light of God's kingdom, from the right and the might that Satan once exercised over us, to the benevolent power of our loving Master and God, so that we may receive forgiveness of sins and release from our spiritual debt to God (as well as release from the power and penalty of sin and one day future even from the presence and pleasure of sin) and an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for us who are set apart from the world and unto God, made holy forever in our position clothed in the righteousness of Christ all this actuated solely by genuine faith (shown genuine by changed lives, loving obedience and enduring spiritual fruit) in Jesus Christ and His Gospel of salvation.

## **THE GOSPEL OPENS THE EYES OF OUR HEART**

**Open their eyes** - A figure of speech to open their eyes spiritually.

**D L Moody** - I REMEMBER one night when the Bible was the driest and darkest book in the universe to me. The next day it was all light. I had the key to it. I had been born of the Spirit. But before I knew anything of the mind of God in His word I had to give up my sin.

**To open:** The purpose of Paul's witness and proclamation was to open their eyes to eternal Truth which produces a change in THINKING which results in a NEW DIRECTION, DOMINION, DESTINY, & "DOWRY". Acts 14:27, Rev 3:7,8,20]

### **Open their eyes - Cross References**

Act 9:17 And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me **so that you may regain your sight**, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and **he regained his sight**, and he arose and was baptized;

**Ed:** Now Paul had not only his physical eyes opened but more importantly his spiritual eyes opened!

Ps 119:18 Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Thy law.

**Ed:** A great prayer to pray to our Father before we open His Word. It is a supernatural Word and needs supernatural "assistance!" - see [Illumination of the Bible](#)

Ps 146:8 **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind;** The LORD raises up those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous;

**Ed:** Jesus did open a few eyes spiritually (and God can still do that!) but more significantly Jesus opens the eyes of the spiritually blind (even as he did for [Fannie Crosby](#) although she remained physically blind all her life. What a supernatural paradox that so many of her hymns speak of spiritual sight!)

[Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;](#)

Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,  
**Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;**

Angels descending, bring from above  
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,  
I in my Savior am happy and blest;  
**Watching** and waiting, looking above,  
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Isa 29:18 And on that day the deaf shall hear words of a book, And out of their gloom and darkness **the eyes of the blind shall see.**

**Ed:** This is a prophetic promise which God will fulfill in the [Messianic Kingdom](#)

**John MacArthur** - The spiritual blindness of Israel will no longer exist. Jesus gives the words an additional meaning, applying it to His ministry of physical healing for the deaf and blind (Mt 11:5; cf. Isa 35:5).

Isa 32:3 Then **the eyes of those who see will not be blinded** And the ears of those who hear will listen.

**Ed:** This is a prophetic promise which God will fulfill in the [Messianic Kingdom](#)

Isa 35:5 Then **the eyes of the blind will be opened**, And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.

**Ed:** This is a prophetic promise which God will fulfill in the [Messianic Kingdom](#)

Isa 42:7 To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon, And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.

Isa 43:8 Bring out the people who are blind, even though they have eyes, And the deaf, even though they have ears.

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And **recovery of sight to the blind**, To set free those who are downtrodden,

Luke 24:45 Then **He opened their minds** to understand the Scriptures,

John 9:39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that **those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind.**"

2 Co 4:4 in whose case **the god of this world has blinded the minds** of the unbelieving, **that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ**, who is the image of God.

2Co 4:6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is **the One who has shone in our hearts** to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Eph 1:18 **I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened**, so that (1) you may know what is the hope of His calling, (2) what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is (3) the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

**Ed:** This is Paul's prayer for believers! Beloved, let us pray this for one another, believing God will answer it! This passage has just been prayed for as you read the note! I covet your prayers!

Study the uses of the related verb [dianoigo](#) (derived from **anoigo**) and found in Lu 24:45, Acts 16:14-note, Acts 17:3-note

**Open** (455) ([anoigo](#) from **ana** = again + **oigo** = to open) means to open, to open up, to open again, to give access to. To open one's eyes causing them to see (Acts 26:18). To open one's mouth that they might begin to speak (Mt 5:2). Figuratively, to open a "door" meaning to make possible (Col 4:3). Luke records the parallel passages (Lk 11:9, 10). Of heavens open = have the heavens opened or divided so that celestial things become manifest - Mt 3:16; Lu 3:21; Jn 1:51; Acts 7:56; 10:11; Rev 19:11; (Lxx of the following passages) Isa 64:1; Ezek 1:1; Ps 78:23. In 2 Cor 6:11 the idea is to pour out one's mind, open one's heart, to speak fully and frankly. Anoigo is used in NT and Lxx of Jesus not opening His mouth - Not to open one's mouth = not to utter complaints (Acts 8:32; Isa 53:7 cp Ps 38:14; 39:9)

**NET Note on to open their eyes so that...** - Here is Luke's most comprehensive report of Paul's divine calling. His role was to call humanity to change their position before God and experience God's forgiveness as a part of God's family. The image of turning is a key one in the NT: Luke 1:79; Rom 2:19; 13:12; 2 Cor 4:6; 6:14; Eph 5:8; Col 1:12; 1 Th 5:5. See also Luke 1:77-79; 3:3; 24:47.

Here is an old Maranatha classic "[Open Our Eyes](#)" - while I don't agree with the "*reach out and touch Him*" lyrics, I do agree with the prayer that God might open the spiritual eyes of our heart to see by faith as Paul prayed in Ephesians 1:18-19+ "I pray that **the eyes**



of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might"

## TURNED FROM SPIRITUAL DARKNESS UNTO SPIRITUAL LIGHT

**So that they may turn** - This is a descriptive definition of repentance. A purposeful, personal (not private) decision to turn to God (as the Spirit leads to repentance = Ro 2:4) not only in mind but in conduct. Repent! Return! Why do they need to turn? That they may receive forgiveness...that brings joy to one's heart because sin weighs one's heart down as David taught in [Ps 32:3-4] The power of God's forgiveness is also taught in [Pr 28:13]

**Turn** (1994)([epistrepho](#) from **epí** = motion toward + **strepho** = twist, turn quite around or reverse) means to revert, to turn about, to turn around, to turn toward, to return and figuratively to convert. The idea is a definite turn to God in conduct as well as in one's mind. Study the 39 uses below and note the association with repentance and conversion.

### Resources on Repentance:

- **Repent** (3340) [metanoeo](#)
- **Repentance** (3341) [metanoia](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Repent. Repentance](#)
- Girdlestone's Synonyms of the OT [Repentance](#)
- Nave Topical Bible [Repentance](#)
- Scofield Reference Index [Repentance](#)
- Thompson Chain Reference [Repentance](#)
- The Topic Concordance [Repentance](#)
- Torrey Topical Textbook [Repentance](#)
- American Tract Society [Repentance](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Repentance](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Repentance](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary [Repentance](#)
- Chabad Knowledge Base [Ten days of repentance](#)
- CARM Theological Dictionary [Repentance](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Repentance](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Repentance of God](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Repentance](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Repentance Repentance \(2\)](#)
- King James Dictionary [Repentance](#)
- Morrish Bible Dictionary [Repentance](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Repentance](#)
- Webster Dictionary [Repentance](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Repentance](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Repentance](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Repentance](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Repentance](#)

**From darkness to light** - Unbelievers are blinded to spiritual truth by Satan, "the god of this world (who) has **blinded** the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.(2 Co 4:4+). Paul describes them as "**being darkened** in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness." (Eph 4:18-19+) But God is greater than Satan and He is light and in Him there is no darkness at all and it is "God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness" (2 Cor 4:6+) "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Ti 1:10+). God "is the One Who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." (2 Cor 4:6+)

**John Phillips** wrote, "We must never minimize the power and authority of Satan over the lives, beliefs, actions, words, and destiny of the lost. The Lord never does. People are Satan's captives. He is the prince and god of this world... He holds people captive with lies and with lusts. This world is his lair. He is both a serpent and a roaring lion, and he can appear as an angel of light. He is the

dragon, a murderer from the beginning, and the father of lies; and the human race lies in his lap." (Exploring Acts)

**John MacArthur** explains that "**The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to open the eyes of the spiritually blind...**by "[convicting] the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged." (John 16:8–11) Genuine conviction will result in transformation of life, as those convicted turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God." (**ED**: Dr MacArthur's comment emphasizes the critical need to pulpits to preach the word and not give way to itching ears! We need to remember the words of Amos 8:11 ""Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord GOD, "When I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, But rather for hearing the words of the LORD.")

**Darkness** (4655)(**skotos** from **skia** = shadow thrown by an object. Skia it can assume the meaning of skotos and indicate the sphere of darkness) is literally that sphere in which light is absent.

**Skotos** figuratively refers to **spiritual or moral darkness** (including a lack of understanding) as in the following examples

"(Jesus declared) And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the **darkness** rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. (John 3:19)

"(the gospel would) to open their eyes so that they may turn from **darkness** to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.' (Acts 26:18)

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the **darkness**, we lie and do not practice the truth (truth is not only something we should believe and teach but also something we should practice, otherwise our life is a "lie") (1John 1:6-[note](#))

And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of **darkness**, but instead even expose them; (Ephesians 5:11 [sermon note](#))

For He delivered us from the domain of **darkness**, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, (note [Colossians 1:13](#))

The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of **darkness** and put on the armor of light. (see note [Romans 13:12](#))

Absence of light leaves room for evil and sin. In this sense **darkness** may be described as evil.

In his first epistle **Peter** used **skotos** figuratively explaining to the believers that...

you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of **darkness** (the moral and spiritual condition that enshrouds this present world and all those who do not know Christ) into His marvelous light (note [1 Peter 2:9](#))

Darkness is used to describe the spiritual powers of Satan and his evil empire...

"While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of **darkness** are yours." (Luke 22:53)

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this **darkness**, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ([Ephesians 6:12 note](#))

**Larkin** - Luke will use the metaphor of "closed eyes" for a sinful condition (Acts 28:27/Is 6:10; compare Lk 19:42) and "seeing eyes" for those blessed to witness of God's saving purposes (Lk 2:30; 10:23; compare Is 42:7). ([Ibid](#))

**So that they may turn from darkness to light** - Cross references

Acts 26:23 that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He should be the first to **proclaim light** both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."

Acts 13:47+ (Quoting Isa 49:6) "For thus the Lord has commanded us, I have placed You as **a light for the Gentiles**, That You should bring salvation to the end of the earth. "

**Henry Morris** - It is significant that prophecy in Isaiah is preceded by a strong affirmation of God's work of

creating and sustaining His creation (Isaiah 42:6,7).

Isa 9:2+ The people who walk in darkness **Will see a great light**; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.

Isa 49:6+ He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; **I will also make You a light of the nations** So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

**Henry Morris** - The Father is here speaking to the Messiah, His Son. He is to be "the light of the world" (John 8:12), not only to Israel.

Isa 60:1-3 "Arise, shine; for **your light has come**, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. 2 "For behold, darkness will cover the earth And deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you And His glory will appear upon you. 3 "Nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.

**Criswell** - It should be emphasized that this and the succeeding chapters are addressed to Israel and not to the church. **Failure** to understand this has resulted in the teaching that Israel has forfeited her election and the promises of future blessing. Note that the command to "arise" is accompanied by the strength of the Lord to fulfill that directive. Having received the perfect "light" of the Lord, Israel is to "shine," i.e., radiate that "light" of salvation to the nations. Cf. Ex. 33:18, note, on "glory." Even in the midst of great "darkness," the Lord will arise even as the sun comes up in Zion (v. 2).

**Ryrie** - This chapter describes the glory of Jerusalem and Israel in the millennial kingdom (including previews seen in the return from Babylon). **your . . . you**. Refers to Jerusalem.

**MacArthur** - Addressing Zion (Isa 59:20; 60:14), Isaiah told the city and thus the nation Israel that her light has come, putting her in contrast with the rest of the darkened world. This expressed the glory of Jerusalem during the millennial kingdom. Jerusalem's light will attract other nations seeking relief from their darkness (2:3). Only believing Jews and Gentiles will enter the earthly kingdom after the Day of the Lord, but as the 1,000 years goes along children will be born and nations will become populated by those who reject Jesus Christ. The glory of the King in Jerusalem, and His mighty power will draw those Gentiles to His light.

Mal 4:2+ "But for you who fear My name the **sun of righteousness will rise** with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.

Mat 4:16 "The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light, And to those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, Upon them a light dawned."

Lk 1:79- note To shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace."

Lk 2:32-note A light of revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Thy people Israel."

Joh 1:4-9 In Him was life, and the life was **the light of men**.

Joh 3:19 "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and **men loved the darkness rather than the light**; for their deeds were evil.

Joh 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "**I am the light of the world**; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Joh 9:5 "While I am in the world, **I am the light of the world**."

Joh 12:35 Jesus therefore said to them, "For a little while longer **the light** is among you. Walk while you have **the light**, that darkness may not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. 36 "While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and He departed and hid Himself from them.

2 Co 4:6+ For God, who said, "**Light shall shine out of darkness**," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

2 Co 6:14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has **light with darkness**?

Eph 1:18+ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Eph 4:18+ being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

Eph 5:8+ for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light

Eph 5:14+ But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light (esp the light of the Gospel), for everything that becomes visible is light.

1 Th 5:4-8+ But you, brethren, are not in (spiritual) darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief;

1 Pe 2:9+ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim (Every believer's purpose until we go home) the excellencies of Him **who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;**

1 Jn 2:8+ On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because **the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining** 2:9 The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.

## **TRANSFERRED FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT**

**From the dominion of Satan to God** From the kingdom of darkness ruled by Satan who has the authority (the right and the might) to rule over those trapped in spiritual darkness. Paul describes the effect of the Gospel as producing in a effect a transfer from Satan's kingdom (darkness) to God's kingdom (Light). Paul describes this supernatural, miraculous transfer in Colossians saying we are to be...

giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in **Light**. For He rescued us from the **domain** (same Greek word as dominion = [exousia](#)) **of darkness**, and transferred ([methistemi](#)) us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:12-14+)

**Larkin** - The bondage of Satan's *power* ("authority"; Lk 4:6+; Lk 22:53+) can be exchanged for the gracious sovereignty of God, who is greater (Lk 4:36+; Lk 5:24+; Acts 8:19+). The positive blessings that flow from this transformation encompass one's past, present and future. There is *forgiveness of sins*, one of Luke's favorite ways of describing what salvation provides for us (Lk 4:18+/Is 61:1; Lk 24:47+; Acts 2:38+; Acts 5:31+; Acts 10:43+; Acts 13:38+). And there is a new eternal destiny grounded in a new identity. We have a *place* (*kleros*, a lot or portion of an inheritance, Ps 78:55; compare Acts 1:17+; Acts 8:21+) *among those who are sanctified by faith* in Jesus (Acts 16:31+; Acts 20:32+; Acts 20:21+; Acts 24:24+). Trust in Christ is our defining moment. ([Ibid](#))

**Dominion** (1849) ([exousia](#) from *éxesti* = it is permitted, it is lawful meaning liberty of action) means the power to do something and was a technical term used in the law courts, of a legal right. "Authority or right is the dominant meaning (of *exousia*) in the New Testament." (Vincent) **Exousía** in short refers to delegated authority and combines the idea of the "right and the might", these attributes having been granted to someone.

**Vine** says **exousia** evolved "from the meaning of "leave or permission," or liberty of doing as one pleases, it passed to that of "the ability or strength with which one is endued," then to that of the "power of authority," the right to exercise power...or "the power of rule or government," the power of one whose will and commands must be obeyed by others. In short *exousia* is "the right & the might" (see Ro 9:21). *Exousia* describes the authority a person has delegated to him fr someone else. The person delegating authority is in a sense OUT OF HIMSELF and acting in the person to whom he has delegated the authority. Thus, the word means "DELEGATED AUTHORITY" or the power of authority and of the right of that authority.

**Wuest** writes that **exousía** means literally "to be out," and was used of that authority which a person has which is delegated to him from someone else. The person delegating the authority is in a sense out of himself and acting in the person to whom he has delegated the authority. Thus, the word means "delegated authority." The word means also "the power of authority and of right." It was used in legal practice of delegated authority. Here it is used of our Lord as having that authority in Himself, not derived from others. The rabbis quoted from other rabbis and felt themselves to be expounders of tradition. The Messiah struck a new note here, and the people were quick to recognize it. They saw that here was a Teacher who spoke on His own **authority**." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

## **COMPLETE FORGIVENESS OF SINS FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN**

**Warren Wiersbe** - The lost sinner is like a blind prisoner in a dark dungeon, and only Christ can open his eyes and give him light and freedom (2 Cor. 4:3–6). But even after he is set free, what about his court record and his guilt? The Lord forgives his sins and wipes the record clean! He then takes him into His own family as His own child and shares His inheritance with him! What must the sinner do? He must trust Jesus Christ ("faith that is in Me"—Acts 26:18). Paul had to lose his religion to gain salvation! He discovered in a moment of time that all of his righteousnesses were but filthy rags in God's sight, and that he needed the righteousness of Christ (Isa. 64:6). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Forgiveness** (859)(**aphesis** from **aphiemi** = action which causes separation and is in turn derived from **apo** = from + **hiemi** = put in motion, send) literally means to send away or to put apart, a letting go, a leaving behind, a removal. **Aphesis refers to a remission** as when one remits (pardons, cancels) a debt, or releases then from an obligation. To release from captivity.

**Remission** (see [definition of English word](#)) of sins means once and for all taking them away, removing the guilt, punishment and power of sin. And so to release one's sins, is not just release from the ("legal" or forensic) charge and the just penalty of sin but also release from the power and dominion of sin (and in Heaven the release from the presence of sin and the pleasure of sin). And so we see that Wuest translates Col 1:14+ as "the putting away of our sins" ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

The OT gives us a beautiful picture of the meaning of **aphesis** in the celebration of the **Year of Jubilee**. In fact there are 11 uses of **aphesis** in the **Septuagint** translation of Leviticus 25+ (Lev 25:10-13, 28, 30-31, 33, 40, 41, 50, 52, 54) where **aphesis** is frequently substituted for the Hebrew word **Jubilee**, so that instead of the phrase **Year of Jubilee** the Lxx translated into English reads "**Year of the Release**" in Lev 25:13 (or "Jubilee of Release in Lev 25:11+). One aspect of the Year of Jubilee involved the setting free of indebted servants or slaves (cf Lev 25:10+). It is interesting that the OT release from debts was associated with a time of celebration. How much more should we as NT saints daily celebrate and revel in the truth that we have been released from our sin debt! I fear I do not ponder this profound truth often enough and begin to take it for granted and become complacent and even indifferent which makes me vulnerable to committing sin! We need to remember that the Year of Jubilee was an OT picture which pointed to and was fulfilled in the crucifixion of the Messiah Whose fully atoning, substitutionary death made release from sin, Satan and death possible for all who receive this truth by grace through faith. Here is an example from Leviticus 25...

Leviticus 25:10+ You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a **release** (Hebrew = **deror** = a flowing, liberty; Lxx = **aphesis**) through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family.

Leviticus 25:12+ 'For it is a jubilee (Hebrew - yobel = ram's horn; Lxx = **aphesis** + onmasia = shouting, a day for blowing the trumpets - The beginning of this year was marked by the blast of the [Shofar \[Jewish Encyclopedia\]](#) or ram's horn); it shall be holy to you. You shall eat its crops out of the field.

#### Related Resource:

- [What is the Year of Jubilee?](#)

**Mounce** writes that **aphesis** "almost always refers to divine forgiveness, and its meaning is usually clarified by adding "of sins." In Eph 1:7+; Col 1:14+, Paul defines redemption as specifically related to "the forgiveness of sins." The forgiveness of sins is a central feature of the Christian message and witness, standing at the heart of the gospel. Also, the divine initiative in the forgiveness of sins creates a forgiving spirit in the life of the Christian. As Christ forgave us, so should we forgive others (Mt 5:38–48+; Ro 12:19–21+).(Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words)

**Sin** (266)(**hamartia**) literally conveys the idea of missing the mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow (in Homer some hundred times of a warrior hurling his spear but missing his foe). Later **hamartia** came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. **Hamartia** in the Bible signifies a departure from God's holy, perfect standard of what is right in word or deed (righteous). It pictures the idea of missing His appointed goal (His will) which results in a deviation from what is pleasing to Him. In short, sin is conceived as a missing the true end and scope of our lives, which is the Triune God Himself. As **Martin Luther** put it "*Sin is essentially a departure from God.*"

#### Forgiveness Cross References:

Act 3:19+ "Repent therefore and return, that **your sins may be wiped away**, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

Act 5:31+ "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and **forgiveness of sins**.

Act 10:43+ "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name **everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.**"

Act 13:38+ "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that **through Him forgiveness of sins** is proclaimed to you, 39 and **through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things**, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

Ps 32:1 (quoted in Ro 4:7) A Psalm of David. A Maskil. How blessed is he whose transgression is **forgiven**, Whose sin is covered!

Ps 32:2 (quoted in Ro 4:8) How blessed is the man to whom the LORD **does not impute iniquity**, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!

Luke 1:77+ To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the **forgiveness of their sins**,

Luke 24:47+ and that **repentance for forgiveness of sins** should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Eph 1:7+ In Him we have redemption through His blood, **the forgiveness of our trespasses**, according to the riches of His grace,

Col 1:14+ in whom we have redemption, **the forgiveness of sins**.

1 Jo 1:9+ If we confess (present tense - calls for this to be a continual activity) our sins, He is faithful and righteous **to forgive us our sins** and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 Jo 2:12+ I am writing to you, little children, because your sins **are forgiven** you for His name's sake.

## **AN INHERITANCE IN CHRIST FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN!**

Our inheritance is now and then. We have a down payment in many ways in this passing world, but the consummation of our inheritance awaits the eternal world. There believers will enjoy divine blessings forever and ever. Amen

**Inheritance** (lot) (2819) (**kleros** from **kláo** = to break) was first a specially marked small object, pebble or a piece of wood used in casting lots as in Acts 1:17, 26+. The object was thrown down in order to aid the making decisions a practice based on pagan views of chance (Greeks and Romans), or in the case of believers using the lot and interpreting the result as guided by God (see Acts 1:26 in choosing Judas' replacement).

**Kleros** also was used to refer to the **allotted portion** or **inheritance**, specifically one's **possession** or **what is possessed** (Acts 8:21+, Acts 26:18, Acts 20:32+, Colossians 1:12+)

**Inheritance Cross References** -- Dear weary and beleaguered saint, take a moment to SIT and SOAK in these wonderful promises in Christ. You may be poor by the world's standard's but by the higher standard of God, YOU ARE RICH (2 Cor 8:9), all you in whom the Spirit has opened your eyes and placed you in Christ Jesus! And this inheritance is FOREVER - see 1 Peter 1:4+.

Rom 8:17+ and if children (Ro 8:16), **heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ**, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. (Satan tempts us with a crown but the end is suffering. God's plan is suffering now and a crown in the future. No cross, no crown!)

Eph 1:11+ also **we have obtained an inheritance**, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

Eph 1:14+ who is given as a pledge (**arrabon** = earnest, down payment!) **of our inheritance**, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession (When we were saved, we were redeemed, set free by the blood of Christ from the power and penalty of sin = past tense REDEMPTION = JUSTIFICATION, but beloved the *best is yet to come* when we will be saved from the presence of sin - cp Eph 4:30 = Future tense REDEMPTION = GLORIFICATION), to the praise of His glory.

Col 1:12+ giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified (**hikanoo** = made us adequate) us **to share in the inheritance of the saints in light**.

Heb 9:15+ And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the **promise of the eternal inheritance**.



JamES 2:5+ Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and **heirs of the kingdom** which He promised to those who love (present tense = continually = not perfection [or none of us would qualify!] but as the general direction of our life) Him?

1Pe 1:4-[note](#) to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

Acts 20:32+ "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those **who are sanctified**. ([perfect tense](#) = past completed action with ongoing [forever] effects!)

#### Related Resource:

- [What is our inheritance in Christ?](#)

## THE SPIRIT SETS US APART FROM THE WORLD AND WHOLLY UNTO GOD

**Those who have been sanctified** - It is important to note the tense of the verb **sanctified** is [perfect tense](#) which describes a past action at a point in time (the moment we were born again by grace through faith by the Spirit's work) with ongoing effect or result. So even the tense supports the common saying (used I fear too loosely to give assurance to those who may have just "professed" faith but never shown any change in the behavior or lifestyle to validate their receipt of a new heart and the indwelling Holy Spirit) "ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED!" The [perfect tense](#) supports that is a **once and forever** occurrence and gives us an assurance of salvation!

Notice also that **sanctified** is in the [passive voice](#) which signifies that act of setting us apart is the result of the supernatural work of an external power, specifically the [soteriological](#) (salvific) work of the Holy Spirit. We were like a drowning man who put his hand up out of the water and the folks nearby grabbed the hand and lifted him to safety (this actually occurred to me as a young boy). But even this is not a completely accurate picture, because even our act of reaching out for the "life raft" of the Spirit was a work initiated and empowered by the Spirit. And yet we still had to exert an act of our will to follow through. This is the mysterious but very real interaction between God's sovereign working and our free will! I won't even pretend to try to explain how this works but they are "good friends" and no one tries to separate "good friends." Perhaps in eternity the Father will unfold the manifold mysteries of our salvation.

**Have been sanctified** ([hagiazō](#)) means that we have been "set apart" which is the idea inherent in the meaning of a saint ([hagios](#)). We have been set apart by the Spirit from the spiritual darkness of Satan's kingdom to the spiritual light of Christ's Kingdom. That is our (forever) position, but our high position in Christ calls for daily holy practice in the power of the Spirit of Christ. **This begs the question beloved are you walking in the light and the power of Christ in you the hope of glory? Are you diligently seeking to avoid the ever increasing spiritual darkness of this fallen, evil, anti-God world system (it's difficult to avoid I realize, which is why we need more than ever to daily depend on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit Who will guide us into paths of righteousness for His Namesake.)?**

**Have been sanctified** (37) ([hagiazō](#) from [hagios](#) = holy, set apart) means to set apart for God, to sanctify, to make a person or thing (in the OT altars, days, priests, etc were set apart) the opposite of *koinos*, which means profane or common.

**Hiebert** - The primary meaning of sanctify is "to set apart, to consecrate," but it also carries the thought of the resultant holiness of character in the consecrated. The note of holiness was already sounded in 1 Th 3:13, 4 :3-8. ([Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996](#))

Having once been set aside now daily continually allowing the Spirit to turn us from darkness to light...that is why it is so critical that we are the light of God's truth every day of our life...we are ever vulnerable to lies and deception...angels of light and lusts of our flesh. But by faith, believing in God's Word, trusting (obeying) no matter what the circumstances looks like (God has the only eternal perspective) or what God has sent or allowed, that momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.

#### Sanctified cross references:

Act 20:32+ "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who **are sanctified**. ("all those who are saved.")

John 17:17 "**Sanctify** (Command) them in the truth; Thy word is truth. (Jesus' prayer for us today. From this prayer what is God's part? What is our part? How important is it to be in the Living Word DAILY so that God's very breathed WORD might be at home in our heart! The Spirit takes that WORD and transforms us -- sets us

apart as it were -- 2 Cor 3:18).

1Co 1:2 to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those **who have been sanctified** ("[Past Tense Salvation](#)" = Justification) in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:

1Co 1:30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, Who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and **sanctification**, and redemption,

1Co 6:11 And such were some of you; but you were washed, but **you were sanctified** ("[Past Tense Salvation](#)" = Justification), but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

Titus 3:5 He saved us ("[Past Tense Salvation](#)" = Justification), not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

Heb 10:10 By this will **we have been sanctified** ([perfect tense](#) = once and **forever** [= assurance of salvation!] set apart! = "[Past tense salvation](#)") through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Heb 10:14+ For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are [present tense](#) = being daily = "[Present tense salvation](#)" - could be better translated "those who are daily being set apart" = Progressive Sanctification) sanctified.

Rev 21:27+ and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (AKA the "sanctified" ones).

## SPIRITUAL EYES ARE OPENED BY FAITH IN JESUS

**Faith** (4102)([pistis](#)) is firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, veracity, reality or faithfulness. Not just mental assent but firm conviction, surrender to that truth and conduct emanating fr that surrender. In sum, faith shows itself genuine by a changed life.

**Faith** (4102) ([pistis](#)) is synonymous with trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything, but in Scripture usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it. Note that this discussion of [pistis](#) is only an overview and not a detailed treatise of this vitally important subject. Those interested are directed to respected, conservative books on systematic theology for more in depth discussion (eg, Dr Wayne Grudem's book [Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine](#) ([free online pdf](#) or [here](#)) is an excellent, uncompromising, imminently readable resource for the lay person. See especially Chapter 35 which addresses the question "What is saving faith?" in an easy to understand manner.) Much of this "definition" deals with the general word group for faith (**pistis** = noun, [pistos](#) = adjective, [pisteuo](#) = verb)

As **pistis** relates to God, it is the conviction that God exists and is the Creator and Ruler of all things well as the Provider and Bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. As faith relates to Christ it represents a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through Whom we obtain eternal salvation and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. Stated another way, eternal salvation comes **only** through belief in Jesus Christ and no other way.

Acts 16:31; Jn 3:14-17; 6:69; Ro 3:21-28; 4:5; 5:1; 9:30;10:9-11;Gal 2:16; 3:11, 24; Eph 2:8, 9; Phil 3:9

### By faith cross references:

Acts 13:39 and through Him everyone **who believes** is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

Acts 15:9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts **by faith**.

Acts 16:31 They said, "**Believe** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

John 3:14-17 "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; 15so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. 16"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

John 4:10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

John 4:14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give

him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

John 7:38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. "

John 7:39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Ro 5:1 Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Ro 5:2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

Gal 2:20+ "For through the Law I died to the Law, that I might live to God.

Gal 3:2+ This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

Gal 3:14+ in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Eph 2:8+ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

Heb 11:6+ And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

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## Chuck Smith - Acts 26:18

### I. "TO OPEN THEIR EYES."

**A. The correct assumption is that men's eyes are closed** The Bible speaks of a spiritual blindness.

#### 1. Paul spoke of those

in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Co 4:4-[note](#))

being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart (Eph 4:18-[note](#))

#### 2. One of Satan's strategies is to blind a person to the reality of their own condition.

##### a. Look how long it takes an alcoholic to admit it, some never do.

1. To everyone else it is so obvious.
2. Their family and friends all know it.
3. They keep insisting that there is no problem they can quit any time they want to.

##### b. Rarely do you hear a person admitting to a drug addiction.

1. You don't hear them say, "I am a dope fiend."
2. Or "I am a drug addict."
3. They may admit to having a slight problem with drugs, but they somehow feel that they are still in control, when the truth is they are hopelessly addicted.

##### c. People are blind to the fact that one day they will stand before God and have to give an account for their sins.

1. They feel that death is the end of all existence. The Bible says "and inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment," (Heb 9:27)
2. There are those who somehow feel that their good works will placate the wrath of God against their sin. The Bible says that our good works or righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God (Isa 64:6KJV).
3. Paul asked in his letter to the Romans, "Do you think that you shall escape the judgment of God?" (Ro 2:3)

##### d. They are blind to the fact that unless a person is born again they will not enter the kingdom of

**heaven.** (Jn 3:3-5)

1. The gate is much narrower than man has been led to believe. Jesus said, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Mt 7:13-14)

2. It is true that all religions lead to god, but not God the Father, the creator of the Universe. There is only one way, and that is Jesus Christ who said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." (Jn 14:6)

### **3. The way to heaven is not as easy as they think or they try to make it.**

1 Co 6:9-10 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

Gal 5:19-21 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice ([prasso](#) in the present tense = as their unabated, habitual practice, their lifestyle, not occasions episodes of sin which even believers experience. NB: As this verse teaches "Practice" DO NOT may perfect but instead assures that one is perfectly lost forever!) such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Eph 5:5-[note](#) For this you **know** (command to know) with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

### **3. A person living in sin is to be greatly pitied for he is walking in darkness, and does not realize that he is on the road to hell. John wrote**

1 Jn 2:11-[note](#) But the one who hates ([present tense](#)) his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

### **B. If your eyes have been opened to the truth of God, then they have been opened to the truth about yourself.**

1. It is seeing myself in the light of God or His Son Jesus Christ that is so important.

2. If we compare ourselves with others, we may not fare too bad.

3. If you compare ourselves with Jesus then we must admit that we are hopeless undone.

a. Isaiah, "In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple....Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." (Isa 6:1, 5-[note](#))

b. When Peter realized who Jesus was he said, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." (Luke 5:8)

c. Daniel describes the effect of his great vision of the Lord, he said, "My beauty turned into corruption." (Ed: Correction - Probably referring to Satan's self-deception described in Ezekiel 28:17KJV).

4. Paul said that those who were measuring themselves with themselves, or comparing themselves with themselves were not wise. (2 Cor 10:12KJV)

### **C. The first work of the Spirit of God in our lives is to open our eyes to the truth.**

1. The truth about God.

2. The truth about ourselves.

## **II. TO TURN THEM FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.**

### **A. The kingdom of God is a kingdom of light and life.**

### **B. The world today is wrapped up in the kingdom of darkness.**

1. When Paul was writing to the Colossians he thanked God for making us fit to be partakers of the

inheritance of the saints in light delivering us from the power of darkness, that He might translate us into the kingdom of His Son.

2. I am appalled at the darkness in the world today.

- a. I cannot conceive the things that are being reported in the news media.
- b. I cannot imagine a father sexually abusing his own little daughter.
- c. I cannot imagine the darkness of a man's mind who would make love to another man.
- d. I cannot conceive the millions of babies that are being destroyed in our land today by government consent, and many times government subsidies.
- e. That same government will fine you heavily and possibly imprison you if you destroy an eagles egg, or kill a kangaroo rat.
- f. There is something radically wrong with a government that will protect an unborn eagle, but not a unborn child. That puts the life of a rat above that of a child.

3. Surely the whole world is lost in the darkness of sin.

### **C. Paul was commanded by Jesus to bring men into the light.**

1. Darkness is a symbol for evil.
2. Light is a symbol for purity.
3. To the Ephesians Paul said, Eph 5:8-note for you were formerly **darkness**, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (**Ed note** - Paul did NOT say they were IN darkness but that they WERE darkness! Woe!)
4. Jesus said that "men loved the darkness rather than the light; for (**Ed: term of explanation** - explains how you can discern their love of darkness, their dark heart is disclosed by their dark deeds!) their deeds were evil."

### **D. There is always that sharp contrast, and you are either walking in darkness or in light.**

## **III. THE POWER OF SATAN UNTO GOD.**

A. You were at one time held by the power of Satan. You were a slave to sin.

B. Jesus died that He might redeem you from your slavery to sin. Paul said in Romans 6 beginning with verse 16, don't you realize that whoever you yield yourselves servants to obey, you become their slave? Whether it is to sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness. Thank God, that though you were the slaves of sin, now because you have obeyed from the heart that doctrine which was delivered you. You have been freed from sin and have become the servants of righteousness. For even as you once yielded your bodies as slaves of uncleanness, and iniquity, even so now yield your bodies as servants of righteousness unto holiness. For when you were the servants of sin, you had no righteousness. You have no fruit in those things of which you are now ashamed, for the end of those things is death. Now that you have been made free from your slavery to sin, you have become the servants of God. The fruit of your new life is holiness and the final result is everlasting life.

1. Jesus said, "Whoever sins, becomes a slave to sin."
2. Speaking of false teachers Peter said, "While they promise you liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption, for by whatsoever a man is overcome, of the same he is brought into slavery."
3. John is even stronger for he wrote, "He that practices sin is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. This is the reason God sent His Son into the world, that He might destroy the works of the devil."
  - a. Jesus and only Jesus can free you from the hold that sin has on your life.
  - b. The Bible says that if the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed.
  - c. Would you like to be free from those evil desires that have brought you into bondage?
  - d. This is what the gospel is all about.
4. Opening a persons eyes to the truth, bringing them out of darkness into the light, freeing them from the power of the devil that they might become the servants of God.

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## Oswald Chambers - The opened sight

To open their eyes, ... that they may receive ... Acts 26:18

This verse is the grandest condensation of the propaganda of a disciple of Jesus Christ in the whole of the New Testament.

The first sovereign work of grace is summed up in the words—"that they may receive remission of sins." When a man fails in personal Christian experience, it is nearly always because he has never received anything. The only sign that a man is saved is that he has received something from Jesus Christ. Our part as workers for God is to open men's eyes that they may turn themselves from darkness to light; but that is not salvation, that is conversion—the effort of a roused human being. I do not think it is too sweeping to say that the majority of nominal Christians are of this order; their eyes are opened, but they have received nothing. Conversion is not regeneration. This is one of the neglected factors in our preaching today. When a man is born again, he knows that it is because he has received something as a gift from Almighty God and not because of his own decision. People register their vows, and sign their pledges, and determine to go through, but none of this is salvation. Salvation means that we are brought to the place where we are able to receive something from God on the authority of Jesus Christ, viz., remission of sins.

Then there follows the second mighty work of grace—"and inheritance among them which are sanctified." In sanctification the regenerated soul deliberately gives up his right to himself to Jesus Christ, and identifies himself entirely with God's interest in other men.

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**Adrian Rogers** - If you put your faith in faith, you're a sitting duck for the devil. He will come to you and say, "You're not good enough to be saved." You say, "I know it, but I don't have faith in myself." The devil then says, "There are hypocrites in the church." And you say, "I'm not putting my faith in hypocrites, I'm trusting the Lord." The devil will say to you, "But you don't feel like you should." And you say, "I'm not trusting my feelings. I'm trusting the Lord." As long as your faith is securely in Jesus, the devil can say what he wants, but he cannot defeat you

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**John Wesley's** desire to "**open their eyes**" - During his ministry John Wesley rode over 250,000 miles on horseback, a distance equal to ten circuits of the globe along the equator. He preached over 40,000 sermons

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## Acts 26:18 Open Their Eyes

By Vernon C. Grounds

Psalms 19:1-14

Open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light. —Acts 26:18

Do you agree with the apostle Paul that nature bears witness to the wisdom and power of God the Creator? (Acts 14:15-17; Rom. 1:20). Or do you think that everything accidentally evolved? According to astronomer and writer Carl Sagan, "Nature does not require a Designer. Maybe there is one hiding, maddeningly unwilling to be revealed."

As believers in Christ, we are saddened by people's inability to see the fingerprint of God everywhere in the world (Ps. 19). Many also do not believe that God has revealed Himself in His Son Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-3). They disagree with the Scriptures which declare that the light of the knowledge of God's glory shines in the Savior's face (2 Cor. 4:6) and with our Lord's positive declaration: "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9). If the Lord has opened the eyes of our understanding so that we believe in Him, we can only humbly thank Him for His grace. Because we have done nothing to merit God's mercy, we need to keep praying that the almighty Designer will do for unbelieving skeptics what He has done for us: "Open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light" (Acts 26:18).

Talk to God about the lost—then talk to the lost about God.

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## The Moment I Knew

I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light. —Acts 26:17-18

The lights dimmed on the platform as Tom Whittaker began to sing the words of "Mary, Did You Know?" The steady, quiet strumming of his guitar beautifully complemented his calm, deep voice. His wife, Gloria, says that the first time she heard him sing that song, she realized she was in love with him.

Many people who know Jesus as Savior can point to a specific moment when they suddenly grasped the extent of God's amazing love for them. At that instant, they got it. Ray Boltz describes it in song:

The moment it happened,



It was the moment I knew;  
It was like walking in the darkness  
When the light comes shining through.

Paul had such a moment on the Damascus Road. His first encounter with Jesus transformed him from a fierce persecutor of Christians to the first great missionary. Spurred on by this eye-opening experience, Paul's newfound love for the Savior compelled him to share the gospel with everyone he met (Acts 26).

Perhaps you know about Christ but have never trusted Him for salvation. John wrote, "We know that we have passed from death to life" (1 John 3:14). But that statement applies only to those who look to Jesus for forgiveness.

Because of God's love, you too can "receive forgiveness of sins" through Jesus Christ (Acts 26:18) and be "born again" (John 3:3).

The moment is now.

It's one thing to know there is a God; it's quite another to know the God who is.

By Cindy Hess Kasper

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## **WITH CHRIST AT CALVARY - James Smith**

In Darkness.

1. Sitting in Darkness, Luke 1:78-79
2. Hanging in Darkness, Matt. 27:45-46
3. Called Out of Darkness, 1 Peter 2:9
4. Turned from Darkness, Acts 26:18

Four Scriptures which have a close connection with each other, as we shall see in the course of our meditation.

### **I. Sitting in Darkness (Luke 1:78, 79-note).**

With glee some Bible critics have pointed out here a supposed inaccuracy. "See," say they, "how Zacharias, filled with the Holy Ghost, misquotes Scripture!" This they say on the supposition that he was quoting Isaiah 9:2. But Zacharias did not say so. He was so saturated with Scripture that, on examining his utterance, we find that he was quoting from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Malachi. As a matter of fact there are in Isaiah two special Scriptures on darkness—1st, one on Walking in Darkness (Isa 9:2). But 29 years later, the prophet spoke on Sitting in Darkness (Isa 42:7). It is a picture of deterioration and degeneration, and in our Lord's day it had come true. Once, though in darkness, they exercised an element of freedom and unsettlement and dissatisfaction, for they walked in darkness; now, in fast and fatal bondage, they sit in a dark and loathsome dungeon. Allow this picture language to grip you. The late Dr. Jowett has so graphically drawn attention to it. "Sitting in darkness!" Try to realise it. You sit by the fireside on a winter's night, with a bright fire making the room genial and warm. You sit on, until the fire burns low, and eventually dies out, and the warmth gives place to a searching chill. Then the lamp goes out, and darkness is added to coldness. But you still sit on, and terrible bondage becomes yours. And there are people whose soul-life is just like that. There is no fire in the grate, and their light is gone out, and they abide in cold and dreary desolation, and hard bondage. It was not ever thus. Once there was a fire in the grate, and a bright light showing and shining. The soul of man was lighted by the presence of the Holy Spirit, and warmed by the fact and presence of Divine love. But sin changed all this. Sometimes a darkened room helps an invalid to recover health, but a darkened soul is the result of a spiritual catastrophe, and betokens the presence of a dead spirit, a lifeless soul. Job speaks of "a land where the light is as darkness."

SITTING IN DARKNESS. This is either a picture of enjoyment, contentment, or enslavement and despondency, or all.

### **II. Hanging in Darkness (Matt. 27:45, 46).**

Have you ever connected Sitting in Darkness with Hanging in Darkness? There is a very close connection. If we had never walked or sat in the darkness of sin, He would never have found it necessary to have hung in darkness. He hung in darkness to atone for our sin, and to make it possible for us to sit in light—the light of His presence and love. The solar darkness He experienced, was an emblem of soul-darkness He endured on our account.

### **III. Called Out of Darkness (1 Peter 2:9).**

This declares that for those sitting in darkness God has a tender regard. That, for them, "a Day-spring from on High hath visited us." That also a voice is heard, calling out of the darkness.

#### IV. Turned from Darkness (Acts 26:18).

Do you say: "I hear the voice calling me out of darkness, but I am chained fast, and cannot respond." Well, for you there is hope, for there is One Who will turn you out of darkness, for He can liberate you from the fetters of sin, and lead you right out into liberty. (Handfuls of Purpose)

**Acts 26:19 "So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision,**

NET Acts 26:19 "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

GNT Acts 26:19 θεν, βασιλε γρ ππα, ο κ γεν μην πειθ ς τ ο ραν ππασ

NLT Acts 26:19 "And so, King Agrippa, I obeyed that vision from heaven.

KJV Acts 26:19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

ESV Acts 26:19 "Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

CSB Acts 26:19 "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

NIV Acts 26:19 "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.

NKJ Acts 26:19 "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

NRS Acts 26:19 "After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

YLT Acts 26:19 'Whereupon, king Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

NAB Acts 26:19 "And so, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

NJB Acts 26:19 'After that, King Agrippa, I could not disobey the heavenly vision.

GWN Acts 26:19 "At that point I did not disobey the vision I saw from heaven, King Agrippa.

BBE Acts 26:19 So, then, King Agrippa, I did not go against the vision from heaven;

- **So, King Agrippa.** Acts 26:2, 26, 27.
- **I did not.** Ex. 4:13, 14. Isa 50:5. Jer 20:9. Ezek 2:7, 8; 3:14. Jon. 1:3. Gal 1:16.
- [Alexander Maclaren - Acts 26:19 Heavenly Vision](#)
- [Alexander Maclaren - Acts 26:19 Before Governors and Kings](#)
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

### SAUL'S IMMEDIATE OBEDIENCE

**So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision-** In his conversion Paul asked "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but rise, and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do." (Acts 9:5-6+) The **KJV** is a bit different for in Acts 9:6 it has a question from Paul "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" While this question is not in most modern versions, it is fair to say that when Jesus told him what to do, he obeyed immediately. He began at Damascus and continued until the day it cost him his life! (cp 2 Ti 4:6+) Paul never wavered in his obedience testifying in Acts 20:24+ "I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so **that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus**, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God." Are you (am I) committed to finish your course and the ministry which you received from the Lord Jesus?

**So, King Agrippa** - Paul was focused on this one soul, mentioning **King Agrippa** by name 3 times (Acts 26:2, 19, 27) and six times by his royal title (Acts 26:2, 7, 13, 19, 26, 27).

**THOUGHT** - I am convicted -- many times I have "witnessed" to someone and I did not even know their name! Not a very personal or personable presentation! We need to be [winsome](#) witnesses for our Gentile Jesus!

**John MacArthur** rightly observes that "**Obedience** is the [sine qua non](#) of the Christian life. It accompanies true salvation (Ro 6:16; 1 Pet. 1:14), acknowledges God's authority (Acts 5:29), is an expression of trust in God (Heb. 11:8), and is the proof of believers' love for Him (John 14:15, 21)." (**Ed**: Cp Heb 3:18 and Heb 3:19 where "disobedient" is equated with "unbelief." In John 3:36 we see a

similar statement "“He who **believes** in the Son has eternal life; but he who **does not obey** the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” In short, if one says they belief in Jesus, making a "profession" of faith, and yet demonstrates absolutely no desire to obey God's Word and shows no change in lifestyle, that person is deceived if they think they are going to heaven. If they continue to live like the devil they will dwell forever with the devil in hell which is eternal separation from God.)

**NET Note** on **I was not disobedient**. Paul's defense is that he merely obeyed the risen Jesus. He was arrested for obeying heavenly direction and preaching the opportunity to turn to God.

**Disobedient** (545) (**apeithes** from **a** = without + **peitho** = persuade) (See studies on related words **apeitheia**; **apeitheo**) literally describes one who refuses to be persuaded (unpersuadable), thus picturing one who willfully disregards authority. Impersuasive, incompilant, contumacious.

In studying **apeithes** it is important to understand that the stem **peith-** (pith-, poith-) has the basic meaning of **trust** (cf. Latin = fido, fides; English = fidelity). **Trust** can refer to a statement, so that it has the meaning to put faith in, to let oneself be convinced, or to a demand, so that it gets the meaning of obey, be persuaded. The active meaning of the verb stem **peith-** then is to convince and persuade and is especially characteristic of Greek thought. In secular Greek it interesting to note that "**Peitho**" (art of persuading) was even regarded as a goddess! ([New International Dictionary of NT Theology](#))

**Apeithes** pictures a stubborn, stiff-necked attitude and speaks of disbelief manifesting itself in disobedience. **Apeithes** is opposed to **pistis** or belief (trust).

**TDNT** says **apeithes** "means "unworthy of belief," then "disobedient."

**Marvin Vincent** in discussing **apeitheo** in John 3:36 writes that "**Disbelief** is regarded in its active manifestation, **disobedience**. The verb **peitho** means to persuade, to cause belief, to induce one to do something by persuading, and so runs into the meaning of to obey, properly as the result of persuasion... Obedience, however, includes faith. (**Ed Note:** See discussion of phrase **obedience of faith** in Ro 1:5-[note](#))." (Vincent, M. R. Word studies in the New Testament Vol. 2, Page 1-109)

From these comments, it should not surprise you to discover that in the New Testament the Greek words translated **disobey**, **disobedience**, **disobedient** (**apeitheo** **apeitheia**; **apeithes**) do not stand in contrast with **obedience** but in contrast with **faith**!

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### Some Things That Followed Saul's Conversion — He Implicitly Obeyed Orders - Robert Neighbour

- "I was not disobedient unto the Heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19).

Such were the words that Paul the Apostle spoke to Agrippa, in after years, as he recounted his conversion. They were words that expressed his first steps in the Lord. From the Roman jail Paul, the aged, wrote: "I have finished my course." Such words clearly mean that Paul had fully followed God's will in and through him. What greater ambition can a believer have, than to do all of God's pleasure, standing perfect and complete, in all the will of God? We need men and women who will get on their high tower and listen and see what the Lord will say unto them. Who will implicitly obey Him and go with Him, all of the way. Obedience is the highest manifestation of the workings of the grace of God in one's heart and life. "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me," said Christ. Sin is the transgression of the Law; sin is my way. Salvation is turning from our way and entering upon God's way. Christ becomes Lord and Master, we become His bond-slaves.

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### Our Daily Homily - F B Meyer - Acts 26:19

I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.

To us, also, the heavenly visions come. On our summer holidays, rising between us and some soaring Alp, or meeting us in our walk beside the gently-breaking sea; on beds of pain and in chambers of watching; visions of the risen Lord; visions of his infinite grief and pain which we have caused; visions of the possibilities of our life as a minister and witness of the things which we have seen; visions of results far down the vista wherein dark souls should become light, slaves emancipated, the defiled saintly. Ah, visions of God! ye leave an indelible impression that moulds and ennobles all after-years! Piteable the soul to which visions of a holier, sweeter life never come, or, if they come, are never seen.

The one important matter is our treatment of them. We may indolently refuse to follow the beckoning hand and obey the voice that calls. We may return to our evil courses and follow the devices and desires of our own hearts. We may cling to the prison cell, instead of following the angel that strikes us on our side, and bids us go forth into freedom. And if so, like Balsam, we shall become spiritually blind, and fail to see visions that the dumb creatures recognize, and that would fain arrest us in our perilous career.

On the other hand, if we will obey the vision, we shall not only retain the impression, and feel its prolonged and enthralling power, but

shall receive still further manifestations of the will of God. "A witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen Me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee." To those who love and obey Him, He is ever drawing near with fresh and deeper thoughts of the Father.

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### **Oswald Chambers - Vision**

I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. Acts 26:19.

If we lose the vision, we alone are responsible, and the way we lose the vision is by spiritual leakage. If we do not run our belief about God into practical issues, it is all up with the vision God has given. The only way to be obedient to the heavenly vision is to give our utmost for God's highest, and this can only be done by continually and resolutely recalling the vision. The test is the sixty seconds of every minute, and the sixty minutes of every hour, not our times of prayer and devotional meetings.

"Though it tarry, wait for it." We cannot attain to a vision, we must live in the inspiration of it until it accomplishes itself. We get so practical that we forget the vision. At the beginning we saw the vision but did not wait for it; we rushed off into practical work, and when the vision was fulfilled, we did not see it. Waiting for the vision that tarries is the test of our loyalty to God. It is at the peril of our soul's welfare that we get caught up in practical work and miss the fulfilment of the vision.

Watch God's cyclones. The only way God sows His saints is by His whirlwind. Are you going to prove an empty pod? It will depend on whether or not you are actually living in the light of what you have seen. Let God fling you out, and do not go until He does. If you select your own spot, you will prove an empty pod. If God sows you, you will bring forth fruit.

It is essential to practise the walk of the feet in the light of the vision.

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### **What God Has Done**

Read: Acts 26:6-23

King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. —Acts 26:19

In a debate at Boston College, Christian scholar William Craig Lane convincingly set forth the historical arguments for believing in Jesus' resurrection, much as the apostle Paul did in Acts 26. Then Lane told the story of his conversion.

As a child he never went to church, but in his teens he began to be plagued by questions about death and the meaning of life. He started going to church, but the sermons didn't answer his questions. What he saw in his church-going classmates led him to conclude that most Christians were phonies. He became an angry loner. One day a girl who always seemed to be happy told him that her joy came from having Jesus in her life, and she assured him that Jesus wanted to live in him too.

Lane spent the next 6 months soul-searching and reading the New Testament. "I came to the end of my rope and cried out to God," he said. "I cried out all the bitterness and anger that was within me. And I felt this tremendous infusion of joy, and God became at that moment a living reality in my life—a reality that has never left me."

We tell others our logic for believing in Jesus, which is based on God's Word. But it's also important to tell them what He has done for us personally.

You may be tempted to debate  
To change another's view,  
But nothing speaks with greater power  
Than what Christ does for you. —Sper

When telling others what Jesus can do for them, tell them what He has done for you.

By Herbert VanderLugt

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### **James Smith - WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN? Acts 26:19-28.**

ONE who has—

1. Seen a Vision. "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision."
2. Received a Commission. "To open eyes and to turn from darkness to light."
3. Performed a Consecration. "I was not disobedient."

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**Acts 26:20 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.**

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NET Acts 26:20 but I declared to those in Damascus first, and then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds consistent with repentance.

GNT Acts 26:20 ἁλ το ς ν Δαμασκ πρ τ ν τε κα εροσολμοις, π σ ν τε τ ν χ ραν τ ς ουδα ς κα το ς θνεσιν π γγελλον μετανοε ν κα πιστρ φειν π τ ν θε ν, ξια τ ς μετανο ας ργα πρ σσοντας.

NLT Acts 26:20 I preached first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that all must repent of their sins and turn to God-- and prove they have changed by the good things they do.

KJV Acts 26:20 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.

ESV Acts 26:20 but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.

CSB Acts 26:20 Instead, I preached to those in Damascus first, and to those in Jerusalem and in all the region of Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works worthy of repentance.

NIV Acts 26:20 First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.

NKJ Acts 26:20 "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.

NRS Acts 26:20 but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance.

YLT Acts 26:20 but to those in Damascus first, and to those in Jerusalem, to all the region also of Judea, and to the nations, I was preaching to reform, and to turn back unto God, doing works worthy of reformation;

NAB Acts 26:20 On the contrary, first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem and throughout the whole country of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached the need to repent and turn to God, and to do works giving evidence of repentance.

NJB Acts 26:20 On the contrary I started preaching, first to the people of Damascus, then to those of Jerusalem and all Judaeen territory, and also to the gentiles, urging them to repent and turn to God, proving their change of heart by their deeds.

GWN Acts 26:20 Instead, I spread the message that I first told to the Jewish people in Damascus and Jerusalem and throughout the whole country of Judea. I spread the same message to non-Jewish people. Both groups were expected to change the way they thought and acted and to turn to God. I told them to do things that prove they had changed their lives.

BBE Acts 26:20 But I went about, first to those in Damascus and Jerusalem, and through all the country of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, preaching a change of heart, so that they, being turned to God, might give, in their works, the fruits of a changed heart.

- **declaring both to those of Damascus first**, . Acts 9:19–22; 11:26, etc. and at. Acts 9:28, 29; 22:17, 18.
- **And then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles** - Acts 26:17; Acts 13:46–48. Acts 14:16–21; 22:21, 22. Ro. 11:18–20.
- **That they should repent** . Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21. Jer 31:19, 20. Ezek 18:30–32. Mt 3:2; 4:17; 9:13; 21:30–32. Mk 6:12. Lu. 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; 24:46, 47. Ro. 2:4. 2 Co. 7:10. 2 Ti. 2:25, 26. Rev 2:5, 21; 3:3; 16:11.
- **and turn to God**. Acts 9:35; 14:15; 15:19. Ps 22:27. La. 3:40. Ho. 12:6; 14:2. Lu. 1:16. 2 Co. 3:16. 1 Th. 1:9.
- **performing deeds appropriate to repentance** Isa 55:7. Mt 3:8. Lu. 3:8–14; Lu 19:8, 9. Ep. 4:17–32; 5:1–25; 6:1–9. Titus 2:2–13. 1 Pe 1:14–16; 2:9–12; 4:2–5. 2 Pe 1:5–8.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**PAUL'S MESSAGE**  
**REPENT AND TURN TO GOD**

**But kept declaring both to those of Damascus first** - Note especially Luke's note that "Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ." (Acts 9:22+)

**And also at Jerusalem** - Luke records that Paul was "moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. And he was talking and arguing ([suzeteo](#)) with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death." (Acts 9:28-29+)

**And then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles** - See Acts 13:46, 47, 48+. Acts 14:15,16+; Acts 22:21, 22+.

**Declaring** (telling, announcing, proclaiming) ([518](#))([apaggello](#) from **apó** = from + **aggéllō** = tell, declare from **aggelos** = messenger, one who speaks in place of one who has sent him) means to bring a message or tidings from a person relating what has occurred. The imperfect tense pictures Paul repeatedly declaring.

**That they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance** - Note that repentance is not just a new mindset (a gift from God) but is shown to be authentic by subsequent deeds.

**Appropriate** ([514](#))([áxios](#)) strictly speaking means bringing up the other beam of the scales. Having the weight of another thing of like value, worth as much. Counterbalancing - weighing as much (of like value, worth as much). Is this not a beautiful picture of the supernatural work of repentance. From the picture above, imagine the deeds enabled by the Spirit and reflecting the person's repentance are in the pan on one side of the balance and the person's repentance is in the pan on the other side of the scales (yes, you have to use your "sanctified imagination!"). And what this passage says is that the two "balance pans" are "perfectly balanced." A balance with "repentance" on one side and no "deeds" on the other side would be a picture of false repentance, of making a profession of faith and repentance, but without demonstrating any supernatural fruit to validate or authenticate the profession. Does that make sense?

**NET Note on that they should repent and turn to God** - This is the shortest summary of Paul's message that he preached.

**How important is "repentance"?** Is it a work man does? Is it something added to the gospel? Or is it part of the divinely ordained and bestowed "process" by which a man is saved? Look at a few examples:

- John the Baptist called for repentance "validated" by fruit - Mt 3:2,8
- Jesus began His ministry preaching repent - Mt 4:17 Mk 1:15 Lu 15:4-5+
- Peter preached repentance - Acts 2:38+ Acts 3:19+
- Paul preached repentance - Acts 20:21+ Acts 26:20+
- John preached repentance - Rev 2:5,21<sup>+</sup>, et al
- God desires for all to repent - Acts 17:30<sup>+</sup> 2Pe 3:9<sup>+</sup>

**Even to the Gentiles** - Notice Paul went to Jews first and then to the Greeks (Gentiles) (Ro 1:16<sup>+</sup>).

**Repent** ([3340](#))([metanoéo](#) from **meta** = with, among + **noeo** = to think, exercise the mind <> from **nous** = mind - see study = [metanoia](#)) means to have another mind. It is a change of mind that results in a change of behavior. The corollary = no change in one's behavior = no genuine repentance = no genuine salvation!

**Metanoéo** means to change one's mind in respect to sin, God, and self. To turn to God and from sin (Luke 15:7,10 = "one sinner who **repents**", 1Th 1:9<sup>+</sup> = repentance demonstrated). It is not an intellectual decision but a change of mind that issues in a change of behavior. This change of mind may, especially in the case of Christians who have fallen into sin, be preceded by sorrow ( 2Cor 7:8, 9, 10, 11); but sorrow for sin, though it may cause repentance, is not repentance. Darrell Bock writes "the point is that repentance involves a reorientation of perspective, a fresh point of view. When dealing with God's plan, it means to see that plan in a new way and to orient oneself to it. Luke demonstrates the fruit of repentance expresses itself concretely (Lk 3:10-14). Repentance expresses itself in life, especially in how one treats others." (Gulp!) There can be NO genuine conversion without genuine repentance.

**Robertson** astutely note that the "word (**repent**) was the message of the Baptist, of Jesus, of Peter, of Paul, this radical change of attitude and life."

**God uses at least four factors to prompt repentance** -

- (1) The knowledge of God's Truth should prompt repentance (Mt 11:21-24 - where Chorazin, et al refused to



repent at the Truth; cp Lk 16:30-31 which also illustrates the sufficiency of the Truth to prompt repentance.) Note the deadly deception - one can have Truth (as well as #2 sorrow) without true repentance! Beware!

(2) Sorrow for sin can lead to repentance (2Cor 7:9-10), but the sorrow per se should NOT be confused with true repentance. E.g., Judas felt sorrow for betraying Jesus but did not repent.

(3) God's kindness prompts (leads to) repentance (Ro 2:4).

(4) Fear of final judgment (as discussed here in Acts 17:30-31) can motivate one to true repentance. Indeed, realization that there is no other way of escape but through Jesus, should cause any "rational" person to repent.

**Repentance is not an act separate from faith**, but saving faith includes and implies the true change of mind which is called repentance. As noted in the use of the present imperative (see uses below), to repent is not just an event at the time of conversion, but represents an ongoing lifestyle -- we sin daily, and sometimes we get caught in a "rut" (habit) of sin, and so we are daily in desperate need of God's gracious gift of repentance. In the parable of the two sons, our Lord Jesus Christ gives a beautiful illustration of what true repentance looks like (Read Mt 21:28-31 = notice second son changed his mind and his behavior!).

As **Albert Barnes** wisely said "False repentance dreads the *consequences* of sin; true repentance dreads *sin itself*."

**Turn to God** - An about face! Luke's use of the related verb *epistrepho* serves to reinforce the call to repent. This is beautifully illustrated by the pagans who Paul describes in First Thessalonians...

For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to ([epistrepho](#)) God from idols (**NOTE**: First to God, then from idols, not the converse - when you see the True, then you can recognize the counterfeit!) to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. (1 Th. 1:9, 10<sup>+</sup>)

**THOUGHT** - Notice what happened after they were converted - they served God and and waited for His Son! Do you think those two things have any connection? Of course they do - their future "Looking" motivated their present "Living." This is why a healthy sense of the imminent return of Jesus is so important to cultivate and maintain! Is it any wonder that the Second Coming is mentioned directly or indirectly in every 20-30 verses of the NT? Who you are looking for will (should) radically impact Who you are living for. Are you living for Time or for eternity? The rewards for living for eternity are "out of this world!"

**Turn** (1994) ([epistrepho](#) from *epi* = motion toward + *strepho* = twist, turn quite around or reverse) means to revert, to turn about, to turn around, to turn toward, to return and figuratively to convert. The idea is a definite turn to God in attitude and action, in heart and in conduct. *Epistrepho* is found in association with repentance in Acts 3:19.

**Epistrepho** frequently describes sinners turning to God. See Lk 1:16-17+; Acts 9:35; Acts 11:21; Acts 14:15; 15:19; 2 Cor. 3:16; 1 Th. 1:9-[note](#); 1 Pet. 2:25-[note](#)),

## A HARVEST OF GOOD DEEDS

**Performing deeds appropriate to repentance** - Paul preached the gospel and the appropriate response side by side. Good deeds don't save us but they do demonstrate we are genuinely saved. Faith alone saves but the faith that saves is not alone in that it brings forth genuine fruit that testifies there is a genuine root (faith in Jesus and His Gospel). We see this principle in Ephesians 2:8-9-[note](#) where it is clear that faith alone saves but then Paul immediately explains "or we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, (DO YOU SEE YOUR PURPOSE NOW AS A BELIEVER IN CHRIST? IT IS FRUIT - WHY? BECAUSE FRUIT GLORIFIES THE FATHER - Mt 5:16-[note](#) AND PROVES US TO BE HIS DISCIPLES - John 15:7) which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them (HERE IS WHERE MANY BELIEVERS GO AWRY -- WE NEED TO SEEK GOD'S WILL AND WAY AND NOT JUST "DO" GOOD WORKS FOR THE SAKE OF DOING. GOD IS MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN US "BEING" THAN "DOING" AND IF WE ARE TRULY "BEING" HE WILL SHOW US THE "DOING" HE PREPARED FOR US IN ETERNITY PAST!)." (Eph 2:10-[note](#)).

Here are other NT passages that associate good deeds (works, fruit) as a marker of genuine repentance (and genuine salvation):

Matthew 3:8 "Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance;

Matthew 7:16<sup>+</sup> "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?"

Matthew 7:20+ “So then, you will know them by their fruits.

Luke 3:8-14+ “Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father,’ for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. 9 “Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” 10 And the crowds were questioning him, saying, “Then what shall we do?” 11 And he would answer and say to them, “The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.” 12 And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” 13 And he said to them, “Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.” 14 Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, “And what about us, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages.”

Luke 19:8; 9+ Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.

James 2:18+ But someone may well say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

**Repentance** (3341) (**metanoia** from **meta** = after + **noéo** = to understand) literally means "afterthought" or "to think after" and implies a change of mind.

#### Related Resource:

- [Great quotes on repentance primarily from Puritan writers](#)
- [What is repentance and is it necessary for salvation?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about repentance? What does it mean to repent?](#)
- [Is repentance a change of mind or a turning from sin?](#)
- [What does it mean that God is not willing for any to perish, but that all should come to repentance \(2 Peter 3:9\)?](#)
- [What is cheap grace?](#) (Excerpt - "The idea of carnal Christianity essentially teaches that as long as one makes a profession of faith in Christ, he or she is saved (Romans 10:9), even if there is no immediate obedience to the commands of Jesus and the apostles to live a life of holiness."
- [What is free grace? What is Free Grace Theology?](#) (Excerpt - Many Reformed theologians are appalled by the assertions of Free Grace theologians, accusing them of "[easy believism](#)" or even [antinomianism](#).)

From the NT uses, it is clear that **metanoia** means however much more than merely a change of one's mind but also includes a complete change of heart, attitude, interest, and direction. **Metanoia** is a conversion in every sense of the word. Jesus' teaching would support this conclusion for our Lord declared...

I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who **repents** (**metanoëo**), than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no **repentance** (**metanoia**). (Luke 15:7)

**Bishop Ryle** offers this descriptive definition of repentance - **Repentance** is a thorough change of man's natural heart, upon the subject of sin. We are all born in sin. We naturally love sin. We take to sin, as soon as we can act and think—just as the bird takes to flying, and the fish takes to swimming. There never was a child that required schooling or education in order to learn deceitfulness, selfishness, passion, self-will, gluttony, pride, and foolishness. These things are not picked up from bad companions, or gradually learned by a long course of tedious instruction. They spring up of themselves, even when boys and girls are brought up alone. The seeds of them are evidently the natural product of the heart. The aptitude of all children to these evil things is an unanswerable proof of the corruption and fall of man. Now when this heart of ours is changed by the Holy Spirit, when this natural love of sin is cast out, then takes place that change which the Word of God calls "**repentance**." The man in whom the change is wrought is said to "repent." ([Repentance](#))

One of the best illustrations of **genuine repentance** is found in Paul's description of the saints at Thessalonica...

For they themselves (other believers in Macedonia and Achaia) report about us (Paul, Silvanus and Timothy) what kind of a reception we had with you, and **how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven**, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come. (1Thessalonians 1:9; 1:10-See [notes 1Th 1:9; 1:10](#))

C H Spurgeon in a sermon entitled The Plumbline (Amos 7:7, 8) wrote that...

Side by side with that faith, God puts true repentance. When a man attempts to convert his fellow-man, he gives him a sham repentance, or perhaps he tells him that there is no need of any repentance at all. Certain preachers have been telling us, lately, that it is a very easy matter to obtain salvation, and that there is no need of repentance; or if repentance is needed, it is merely a change of mind. That is not the doctrine that our fathers used to preach, nor the doctrine that we have believed. That faith, which is not accompanied by repentance, will have to be repented of; so, whenever God builds, he builds repentance fair and square with faith. These two things go together; the man just as much regrets and grieves over the past as he sees that past obliterated by the precious blood of Jesus. He just as much hates all his sin as he believes that his sin has been all put away. ([Amos 7:7-8 The Plumbline](#))

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**What is repentance and is it necessary for salvation?** - Many understand the term repentance (from the Greek word *metanoia*) to mean "turning from sin." This is not the biblical definition of repentance. In the Bible, the word repent means "to change one's mind." The Bible also tells us that true repentance will result in a change of actions (Luke 3:8-14; Acts 3:19). Acts 26:20 declares, "I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds." The full biblical definition of repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of action. What, then, is the connection between repentance and salvation? The Book of Acts seems to especially focus on repentance in regards to salvation (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20). To repent, in relation to salvation, is to change your mind in regard to Jesus Christ. In Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts chapter 2), he concludes with a call for the people to repent (Acts 2:38). Repent from what? Peter is calling the people who rejected Jesus (Acts 2:36) to change their minds about Him, to recognize that He is indeed "Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Peter is calling the people to change their minds from rejection of Christ as the Messiah to faith in Him as both Messiah and Savior. Repentance and faith can be understood as "two sides of the same coin." It is impossible to place your faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior without first changing your mind about who He is and what He has done. Whether it is repentance from willful rejection or repentance from ignorance or disinterest, it is a change of mind. Biblical repentance, in relation to salvation, is changing your mind from rejection of Christ to faith in Christ. It is crucially important that we understand repentance is not a work we do to earn salvation. No one can repent and come to God unless God pulls that person to Himself (John 6:44). Acts 5:31 and 11:18 indicate that repentance is something God gives—it is only possible because of His grace. No one can repent unless God grants repentance. All of salvation, including repentance and faith, is a result of God drawing us, opening our eyes, and changing our hearts. God's longsuffering leads us to repentance (2 Peter 3:9), as does His kindness (Romans 2:4). While repentance is not a work that earns salvation, repentance unto salvation does result in works. It is impossible to truly and fully change your mind without that causing a change in action. In the Bible, repentance results in a change in behavior. That is why John the Baptist called people to "produce fruit in keeping with repentance" (Matthew 3:8). A person who has truly repented from rejection of Christ to faith in Christ will give evidence of a changed life (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 5:19-23; James 2:14-26). Repentance, properly defined, is necessary for salvation. Biblical repentance is changing your mind about Jesus Christ and turning to God in faith for salvation (Acts 3:19). Turning from sin is not the definition of repentance, but it is one of the results of genuine, faith-based repentance towards the Lord Jesus Christ. ([Gotquestions](#))

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The Three Stages of the Spiritual Life are accurately noted: - Dean Plumptre. - Acts 26:19-23

1. The repentance for past sins, which is more than a regret for their consequences.
  2. The "turning to God," which implies faith in Him, as far as He is known, and therefore justification.
  3. The doing works meet for repentance (we note the reproduction of the Baptist's phrase; see Matthew 3:8), which are the elements of a progressive sanctification.
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#### **Remorse vs. Repentance - Peter Kennedy (From Generation to Generation)**

"First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds."—Acts 26:20

The Parthenon was the chief temple built by the Greeks honor their goddess Athena. Completed in 432 B.C, on the hill of the Acropolis in Athens, the marble edifice is 101 feet by 228 feet and is recognized as one of the most beautiful examples of classical Greek architecture. Though its exterior remains pretty much intact, its interior has been gutted through centuries of looting. Over the colonnades, high relief scenes of mythical battles were once seen. In the interior of the building there used to be ninety-two wall panels depicting the mythical birth and triumphs of the goddess Athena.

At the gateway of the temple there was an altar. Called the Altar of Tears, this was not a place to offer sacrifices or offerings. It was a quiet, simple spot where worshipers could go to weep and relieve their hurt and guilt. Though their emotions were temporarily assuaged through remorse, the altar of tears could not provide forgiveness through repentance.

John the Baptist preached repentance. So did Jesus Christ, Peter, Paul, and the other apostles. Repentance is more than remorse; it

is a conscious decision for change.

Do you feel a need to repent of anything, great or small? Today come to God and repent of your sin by faith in Jesus Christ. God waits for you with open arms.

"Repentance is not something God demands of you before he will take you back, it is simply a description of what going back is like."—C. S. Lewis

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### **Acts 26:12-23 Change Your Mind**

By Julie Ackerman Link

. . . repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. —Acts 26:20

One of my favorite Peanuts comic strips features Charlie Brown saying to Snoopy, "I hear you're writing a book on theology. I hope you have a good title." Snoopy responds, "I have the perfect title: Has It Ever Occurred To You That You Might Be Wrong?"

Snoopy's title reminds us that our understanding of God and what He requires of us is sometimes twisted. Because our wrong beliefs lead to wrong behavior, we need to "repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance" (Acts 26:20).

The Greek word translated "repent" is *metanoeo*, which means "change your mind." As Paul indicated, repentance does not mean just nodding in polite agreement with God, and continuing the same way we were going. When we turn our thoughts toward God—when we truly agree with Him about what is right—our behavior will follow. Like a car, we go in the direction we are pointed. So, when we truly turn our minds and hearts toward God, our actions change accordingly.

Instead of going happily along, assuming that our choices are right, we need to regularly stop and ask ourselves Snoopy's question. As Paul taught, it is only when we are willing to admit being wrong that we can be certain of being right with God. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We must acknowledge when we're wrong,  
Confessing it as sin,  
If we would know God's power to heal  
And cleanse us from within.  
—Fasick

Either we conform our desires to the truth or we conform the truth to our desires. —Os Guinness

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### **Robert Morgan - THE EVIDENCE OF CHANGED LIVES – THE CASE AGAINST HUMAN NATURE**

In our study of Christian evidences, tonight I'd like to present the case for Christianity in very practical terms. In other words, there is a pragmatic test. There is a great question: Does it work? If Christianity is true, don't you think it ought to make a difference in the lives of those who profess it? Don't you think it should make bad people good, and good people better? The great apologist, Bernard Ramm, said: Christianity "must not only provide us with the materials of a great philosophy, a great theology. It must have a relevancy or tangency to human experience."

This is the presentation of the Gospel that most influences people. They may not engage us in philosophical debates or theological discussions. But Peter said that they'll see our joy, and when they see the hope within us, they'll ask a reason. And we should always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is within us. It's one of our greatest weapons, one of the greatest apologetics. I heard one man put it like this: If your car broke down late at night in a rough neighborhood and you saw a dozen rough and rugged men approaching you, would it make any difference to you if there were just coming out of a Bible study? I'd like to discuss this in three phases.

#### **The Justification Change**

First, there is a change that takes place at justification, when we turn our lives over to Jesus Christ. "If any man be in Christ," says 2 Corinthians 5:17, "he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come."

Deveral years ago, I was speaking in San Francisco. My host took me out for lunch from the airport, and he pulled out an old photo. "Do you know this man?" he asked. The man in the photo was an old, ragged, dirty, flea-bitten man. "No," I said. "He doesn't look familiar to me." "That's me," said the man, smiling. "That's my 'before' picture. That's what I was like before I met Christ."

Have you noticed that whenever the apostle Paul wanted to demonstrate the power of God as exercised through the Gospel, he simply gave his own testimony? He told what he had done for him. He was the first century's greatest opponent of the Christian faith. Saul of Tarsus spearheaded the persecution against the early church, determined to extinguish the flame of Christ before it could spread. He later told King Agrippa his story in (Acts 26:4-18).

**How can you explain the fact that the greatest destroyer of Christianity became its greatest defender?** How can you explain his metamorphosis, as he gladly endured a lifetime of shame, suffering, and the executioner's sword to spread the faith he had once labored to despoil? The mind of Saul of Tarsus was brilliant. His training was superb. His passion was unquenchable. His background and heritage flowed with the Jewish blood of a hundred generations. Yet in one moment he was transformed from the greatest enemy the early church ever faced into the greatest missionary the world has ever known.

**What power could so change a life? The Gospel!** And the Gospel's chain of witnesses from the days of Saul of Tarsus to our own is unbroken, and it grows stronger still. We could tell stories from every generation of the Christian era. But I would like to skip from Paul's day to our own times, looking at stories of people whose lives have been transformed by the sheer force of Jesus Christ through nothing more than their eyes falling upon the powerful pages of Scripture. Perhaps the purest testimonies are of those who are changed—not by persuasive personalities or spell-binding oratory or magnetic appeals—but by merely reading the Word of God itself, finding in it the voltage and veracity necessary to meet the deepest needs of their lives.

Some time ago, I read a remarkable story about a man named Gary Fossen. Gary grew up with an outwardly happy childhood, playing Little League ball, camping, fishing with his family. They lived in the suburbs and had everything money could buy. But under Gary's skin, the blood ran dark and devious. During his college years, he took a shotgun and killed the only three people who had ever loved him: his parents and sister. He was arrested, convicted, and sent to prison. He felt no remorse and described himself as an animal. One day a clergyman came to his prison and started talking about Jesus Christ. Gary cursed him and told him that if he got any closer to the bars that separated them, he would kill him. To his surprise, the preacher kept returning. But Gary only cursed him at every opportunity. One day the minister gave Gary a small Gideon New Testament. Gary took the book, spat on it, threw it on the floor, and kicked it across the room and under his bunk. Sometime later, Gary Fossen grew unbelievably lonely and decided to kill himself. A former paramedic in a nearby cell told him how to cut himself with razor blades so that he would bleed freely and die quickly. They smuggled in a razor, and Gary waited for the lights to go out. He thought about writing a suicide note, but he realized no one would be interested. He had no one to mourn his death. Then he remembered the little book under his bunk. He thought perhaps he should at least read a verse of Scripture before killing himself. He turned to Romans and started reading chapter 6. He went on to Romans 7 and 8. He said, "I had never read the Bible before and the words started burning inside of me." He knelt by his bunk and began trying to pray. He asked God to show him how to be sorry because he still had no remorse. "That night, I saw a slow-motion movie of my life," he later said. "I saw every wicked thing I had ever done and I began to write them all down. The list went on for page and page and I wept over each one. I had not cried at all after the murders, but here I was in my cell crying." That night forever changed Gary Fossen. "I was still in prison, but it didn't matter. That was the end of the pain and loneliness. I would never be alone again. I am still in prison, but I thank God for His Word that is so powerful that it cut into the deep calluses of my heart and seared through all the layers of hate."

Now, ask yourself—can Shakespeare have such an effect? Can Homer or Milton? Or, for that matter, can the writings of Darwin? No. Charles Darwin once wrote a letter to a Christian minister named J. W. Fegan who had conducted a preaching crusade in a village in England. As a result of Fegan's campaign, the alcoholics were converted and the bars closed down. Darwin wrote to Fegan saying, "We (the evolutionists) have never been able to reclaim a drunkard, but through your services I do not know that there is a drunkard left in the village."

### **The Sanctification Change**

Now there is a second kind of change I'd like to mention, and that's the change brought about by sanctification, or by Christian growth. When we come to Christ our lives are changed. There's no doubt about that. But we are by no means perfect. And so here we come to church, and we're all forgiven but imperfect sinners. And so we become a forgiven but imperfect church. One of the greatest excuses people use for not coming to church is that it's full of hypocrites. When someone says that to me, I say, "Yes, absolutely it is. Do you think Christians are perfect people? Don't you realize that in every congregation there are those of varying levels of maturity. We have some very mature Christians in our church, and we have some immature ones. We have some weak ones, and we have some strong ones. And all of us are—to some degree—hypocritical, because we don't always do what we know we should do. Every member of my church occasionally fails. And I'm the biggest hypocrite of all. I've studied the Bible all my life and I still fall short. Sometimes I'm selfish; sometimes I lose my temper; sometimes I think a wrong thought; sometimes I say an unkind word; sometimes I'm proud and difficult. I serve a perfect God and study a perfect Book, but I'm not a perfect person. There are areas in which I know to do better than I do. I'm a hypocrite. And if you're letting that excuse keep you out of church, then you'd just as well die and go to hell right now, because the church in this world is always going to be full of imperfect people." But Christ is perfecting us. He is growing us. 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

We had a man working for us at our house this week, and presently he said how he and his wife had prayed about something. I said, "So are you a Christian?" He replied, "Oh, yes. I've been a Christian for a long time, but I had a lot of baggage I hadn't dealt with from high school. I'd held some things against some people and I had developed a hatred for some of my old buddies. I was a

Christian, but I was a very bitter man. Then I went to the Billy Graham Crusade here in Nashville in 2000. I was even a counselor. But when the invitation was given, I realized that I needed to get serious about my own Christian life before I could help someone else. And I realized I had to forgive some people and deal with some bitterness, and I rededicated myself to Christ. And that has made all the difference.”

### The Glorification Difference

Finally there is the glorification difference. One day we will be perfect. Look at 2 Corinthians 5: “Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” This isn’t an apologetic, of course. We can’t use this as a defense of the faith, because it’s something reserved for heaven; but it’s part of the picture. When we are justified, we are saved from the penalty of sin. As we are being sanctified, we’re being saved from the power of sin. When we are glorified, we will be saved from the very presence of sin. And this three-fold salvation makes us into different people, and that difference is a very powerful presentation of the Gospel.

There once was a powerful British preacher named Hugh Price Hughes. One day, the infidel and notorious freethinker, Charles Bradlaugh, challenged Hughes to a debate. Hughes accepted with a counterchallenge: “I’ll bring one hundred whose lives have been changed by the Gospel; you bring one hundred whose lives have been changed through your testimony. Bradlaugh never showed up, and Hughes turned the occasion into a great testimony meeting.

Let me end with one question. When people look at your life, do they see the evidence of the transforming power of Christ? There’s an old poem that says:

You are writing a gospel, a chapter each day,  
By the deeds that you do, by the words that you say;  
Men read what you write, whether faithless or true.  
Say—what is the gospel according to you?

### Acts 26:21 "For this reason some Jews seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death.

NET Acts 26:21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple courts and were trying to kill me.

GNT Acts 26:21 νεκα το των με ουδα οι συλλαβ μενοι [ ντα] ν τ ερ πειρ ντο διαχειρ σασθαι.

NLT Acts 26:21 Some Jews arrested me in the Temple for preaching this, and they tried to kill me.

KJV Acts 26:21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

ESV Acts 26:21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.

CSB Acts 26:21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple complex and were trying to kill me.

NIV Acts 26:21 That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me.

NKJ Acts 26:21 "For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.

NRS Acts 26:21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.

YLT Acts 26:21 because of these things the Jews -- having caught me in the temple -- were endeavouring to kill me.

NAB Acts 26:21 That is why the Jews seized me (when I was) in the temple and tried to kill me.

NJB Acts 26:21 This was why the Jews laid hands on me in the Temple and tried to do away with me.

GWN Acts 26:21 For this reason the Jews took me prisoner in the temple courtyard and tried to murder me.

BBE Acts 26:21 For this reason, the Jews took me in the Temple, and made an attempt to put me to death.

- **the Jews.** Acts 21:30, 31; Acts 22:22; Acts 23:12–15; Acts 25:3.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries



## PAUL EXPLAINS HIS ATTACK BY THE JEWS

**For this reason** - Why? He went to Gentile "dogs" (as Jews often called them) which the Jews detested and he offered them mercy and salvation from God. He preached the Gospel of repentance leading to fruit which in turn was clear evidence of a [circumcised heart](#). (cf Mt 3:8) This is the same prophetic call that resulted in John the Baptist's martyrdom. The self-righteous seek to suppress the truth of the Gospel (cp Ro 1:18+)

**Some Jews seized me in the temple ([hieros](#)) and tried to put me to death** - Luke records this episode in chapter 21 writing "Then all the city was provoked, and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut. While they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the commander of the Roman cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. (Acts 21:30, 31+)

**Seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death** - Luke recorded this event earlier

Then all the city was provoked, and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut. While they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the commander of the Roman cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. (Acts 21:30; 31+)

And again...

And He said to me, 'Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'" They listened to him up to this statement, and then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!" (Acts 22:21, 22+)

**Comment** - The moment Paul mentioned Gentiles the Jews became furious for they wanted to have nothing to do with a Jew who treated Gentiles like Jews!

And again ....

When it was day, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. There were more than forty who formed this plot. They came to the chief priests and the elders and said, "We have bound ourselves under a solemn oath to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. "Now therefore, you and the Council notify the commander to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case by a more thorough investigation; and we for our part are ready to slay him before he comes near the place." (Acts 23:12-15+)

Clearly Paul was willing to die for the Gospel. **Am I?**

And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, **but whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's will save it.** "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mark 8:34-37)

**NET Note** on "in the temple." - This is actually a reference to the courts surrounding the temple proper,

**Seized** (arrested) (4815)([sullambano](#) from [sun/syn](#) = together with + [lambáno](#) = to take, to seize) means literally to seize or take together and conveys the picture of claspings. **Sullambano** has several meanings depending on the context, the most common meaning being to arrest someone (7/16 uses) or take them into custody.

**Tried** ([imperfect tense](#) - over and over)(Only NT use)(3987)([peiraomai](#) from [peira](#) = trial) means to try, attempt, endeavor. It was used in classical Greek with the genitive of the person it meant to try someone or put them to the test. In Septuagint only in 1 Sa 17:39. Gilbrant adds that "In classical Greek [peiraō](#) generally means "to try, strive, make (some form of) effort." However, it may also be used to indicate putting someone or something to the test (cf. the related term [peirazō](#) [3847]), frequently with the negative implication of mistrust. Nevertheless, in its classical usage it is seldom applied in a religious manner." (Ibid)

**Put to death** (1315)([diacheirizo](#) from [dia](#) = intensifies meaning + [cheirizo](#) = to handle from word [cheir](#) = hand) means literally to lay hands upon and then to kill or to slay (with one's own hands). Only other use of this verb is Acts 5:30+ "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you **had put to death** by hanging Him on a cross." A T Robertson adds "The old verb [diacheirizō](#), to take in hand, middle to lay hands on, to slay."

**Acts 26:22 "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;**

NET Acts 26:22 I have experienced help from God to this day, and so I stand testifying to both small and great, saying nothing except what the prophets and Moses said was going to happen:

GNT Acts 26:22 πικουρ ας ο ν τυχ ν τ ς π το θεο χρι τ ς μ ρας τα της σθηκα μαρτυρ μενος μικρ τε κα μεγ λ ο δ ν κτ ς λ γων ν τε ο προφ ται λ λησαν μελλ ντων γ νεσθαι κα Μωϋσ ς,

NLT Acts 26:22 But God has protected me right up to this present time so I can testify to everyone, from the least to the greatest. I teach nothing except what the prophets and Moses said would happen--

KJV Acts 26:22 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:

ESV Acts 26:22 To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass:

CSB Acts 26:22 To this very day, I have obtained help that comes from God, and I stand and testify to both small and great, saying nothing else than what the prophets and Moses said would take place--

NIV Acts 26:22 But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen--

NKJ Acts 26:22 "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--

NRS Acts 26:22 To this day I have had help from God, and so I stand here, testifying to both small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place:

YLT Acts 26:22 'Having obtained, therefore, help from God, till this day, I have stood witnessing both to small and to great, saying nothing besides the things that both the prophets and Moses spake of as about to come,

NAB Acts 26:22 But I have enjoyed God's help to this very day, and so I stand here testifying to small and great alike, saying nothing different from what the prophets and Moses foretold,

NJB Acts 26:22 But I was blessed with God's help, and so I have stood firm to this day, testifying to great and small alike, saying nothing more than what the prophets and Moses himself said would happen:

GWN Acts 26:22 "God has been helping me to this day so that I can stand and testify to important and unimportant people. I tell them only what the prophets and Moses said would happen.

BBE Acts 26:22 And so, by God's help, I am here today, witnessing to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come about;

- **So, having obtained help from God.** Acts 26:17; Acts 14:19, 20; Acts 16:25, 26; Acts 18:9, 10; Acts 21:31–33; Acts 23:10, 11, 16, etc. 1 Sa. 7:12. Ezra 8:31. Ps 18:47; 66:12; 118:10–13; 124:1–3, 8. 2 Co. 1:8–10. 2 Ti. 3:11; 4:17, 18.
- **I stand to this day testifying.** Acts 20:20–27. Rev 11:18; 20:12.
- **stating nothing.** Acts 26:6; Acts 3:21–24. Lu. 24:27, 44, 46.
- **what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place.** Acts 24:14; 28:23. Mt 17:4, 5. Lu 16:29–31. Jn 1:17, 45; 3:14, 15; 5:39, 46. Ro. 3:21. Rev 15:3.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Here is Jack Arnold's outline for this last section:

**Paul Preaches the Gospel to Agrippa - Acts 26:22-25**

- Acts 26:22 His Commitment to the Old Covenant
- Acts 26:23 His Commitment to the New Covenant
- Acts 26:24-25 His Clash with Festus

**Paul Pleads with Agrippa to Accept Christ - Acts 26:26-29**

- Acts 26:26 His Calm Assurance about Agrippa
- Acts 26:27-28 His Challenge to Agrippa
- Acts 26:29 His Call for Agrippa to Believe

### Paul Proclaimed Innocent by Agrippa - Acts 26:30-32

## PAUL'S STAND AS JESUS' WITNESS

**So, having obtained help from God** - Luke record's God's hand of protection, sometimes with His direct intervention (without any human intermediaries) and other times with human intermediaries who God providentially placed at the right place and the right time. Luke records those episodes below.

Acts 9:23-24+ When many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him, 24but their plot became known to Saul. They were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death;

Acts 9:29-30+ And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death. 30 But when the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.

Acts 14:19, 20+ - But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. 20 But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe.

Acts 16:25; 26+ But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.

Acts 18:9; 10+ And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; 10 for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city."

Acts 21:31-33+ While they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the commander of the Roman cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. 32 At once he took along some soldiers and centurions and ran down to them; and when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. 33 Then the commander came up and took hold of him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains; and he began asking who he was and what he had done.

Acts 23:10; 11; 16+ And as a great dissension was developing, the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them and ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force, and bring him into the barracks. 11 But on the night immediately following, the Lord stood at his side and said, "Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also."

Acts 23:16+ But the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush (described in Acts 23:12-15), and he came and entered the barracks and told Paul.

**THOUGHT** - We all do well to remember that the same God Who repeatedly intervened to protect Paul, also is there to protect us, many times using providential circumstances and people that we will probably not know about until we get to glory! Play this oldie, but goodie - Maranatha chorus entitled [Protector of My Soul](#).

**Having obtained** (5177)([tugchano/tyrchano](#)) is difficult to define but means to experience some happening (attain, gain, find). It tends to be used of what people cannot achieve but may be given, of what is beyond their control and yet not due to mere chance

**Help** (only here in NT)(1947)([epikouria](#) from [epikouros](#) = helper, ally) describes one who serves as ally, help or aid. Herodotus used this word of an auxiliary or mercenary force. This is the only NT use in which Paul recalls times when God delivered him from two plots against his life (Acts 23:12ff.; Acts 25:2-5) and helped him throughout his ministry when he was in affliction or even in prison (2 Cor 1:8-10; 2 Ti 3:11+ 2 Ti 4:17-18+).

**I stand to this day testifying both to small and great - I stand** is histem in the [perfect tense](#) signifying past completed act or action and ongoing or continuing effect or result. Paul paradoxically began to take his "stand" when he fell to the ground on the road to Damascus and this "stand" continued to this day and would continue to the day he died.

**THOUGHT-** O to take such an uncompromising **stand** to testify of Jesus all the days of our life! Amen.

**Wiersbe** comments "It is one thing to have a great beginning, with visions and voices, but quite another thing to keep on going, especially when the going is tough. The fact that Paul continued was proof of his conversion and evidence of the faithfulness of God. He was saved by God's grace and enabled to serve by God's grace (1 Cor. 15:10+). The one word that best summarizes Paul's life and ministry is "witnessing" (see Acts 26:16). He simply shared with others what he had learned and experienced as a follower of Jesus Christ. His message was not something he manufactured, for it was based solidly on the Old Testament Scriptures." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place** - Paul based his arguments for the Gospel on the OT prophecies. Under the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit, Paul was able to see Jesus on all the pages of the Old Testament. In short he knew [Messianic Prophecies](#).

**The Prophets and Moses said was going to take place** - Recall the NT was not available to Paul (he was writing it!) but the Old Testament was (almost every use of the word "Scriptures" in the NT = the OT Scriptures). The phrase "was going to take place" indicates that Paul's approach to the presentation of the Gospel and the background for the Gospel was OT prophecy, especially prophecy that predicted the Messiah Who would suffer and die and be resurrected (Acts 26:23) (See [Messianic Prophecies](#)).

Jesus also appealed to and explained the OT [Messianic Prophecies](#). Wouldn't you love to have been there listening to Word Himself explaining the OT prophecies about Himself!

Luke 24:27+ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

Luke 24:44+ Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

Luke 24:46+ and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,

**John MacArthur** also makes the point that "By placing himself in the line of Moses and the other Old Testament writers, Paul again stressed that Christianity is not heretical but the fulfillment of Scripture." (Ibid)

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#### **Acts 26:19-32 The Best Place To Witness** By Dennis J. De Haan

I stand, witnessing both to small and great. —Acts 26:22

Missionary Doug Nichols and his Filipino co-worker Aries went to a Manila garbage dump, asking God how they might effectively reach the poor who scavenged there. Soon an old man approached and asked if they would guard his handful of cans while he hunted for more.

Doug asked the man how old he was, since it's respectful in the Philippines to ask older people their age. "Oh, it's wonderful you asked," replied the man with a big smile. "I'm 78 years old today."

Aries and Doug sang "Happy Birthday," then shook his hand and gave him a hug. "Are you prepared to go to heaven?" asked Doug. When the man indicated that he wasn't sure, Doug shared the gospel. That day the garbage-dump resident trusted Jesus and became a citizen of heaven.

The apostle Paul had an opportunity to witness to a governor, a king, and prominent citizens (Acts 25-26). We don't know the results of his witness, but Paul was faithful where God had placed him.

When you are concerned for the spiritual needs of others and God opens a door of opportunity, any place is the best place to share the gospel—whether it's at a garbage dump or in a king's palace. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Go to the lost, in the home, in the mart,  
Waiting no longer, today make a start;  
Tell them of Jesus who died in their place,  
Share the good news of salvation by grace.  
—HGB

Any place can be the right place to witness.

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**Acts 26:23 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."**

NET Acts 26:23 that the Christ was to suffer and be the first to rise from the dead, to proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles."

GNT Acts 26:23 ε παθητς Χριστς, ε πρτος ξ ναστ σεως νεκρ ν φς μ λλει καταγγ λλειν τ τε λα κα τος θνεσιv.

NLT Acts 26:23 that the Messiah would suffer and be the first to rise from the dead, and in this way announce God's light to Jews and Gentiles alike."

KJV Acts 26:23 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.

ESV Acts 26:23 that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles."

CSB Acts 26:23 that the Messiah must suffer, and that as the first to rise from the dead, He would proclaim light to our people and to the Gentiles."

NIV Acts 26:23 that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles."

NKJ Acts 26:23 "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."

NRS Acts 26:23 that the Messiah must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles."

YLT Acts 26:23 that the Christ is to suffer, whether first by a rising from the dead, he is about to proclaim light to the people and to the nations.'

NAB Acts 26:23 that the Messiah must suffer and that, as the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles."

NJB Acts 26:23 that the Christ was to suffer and that, as the first to rise from the dead, he was to proclaim a light for our people and for the gentiles.'

GWN Acts 26:23 They said that the Messiah would suffer and be the first to come back to life and would spread light to Jewish and non-Jewish people."

BBE Acts 26:23 That the Christ would go through pain, and being the first to come back from the dead, would give light to the people and to the Gentiles.

- **Christ.** Ge. 3:15. Ps 22, Ps 69. Isa 53. Da 9:24–26. Zech 12:10; 13:7. Lu. 18:31–38; Lk 24:26, 46. 1 Co. 15:3.
- **the first.** Acts 26:8; Acts 2:23–32; 13:34. Ps 16:8–11. Isa 53:10–12. Mt 27:53. Jn 10:18; 11:25. 1 Co. 15:20–23. Col. 1:18. Rev 1:5.
- **He would be the first to proclaim light** See Acts 26:18. Lu. 2:32. Acts 13:47 Mt 4:16
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## THE GOSPEL SUMMARIZED

**That the Christ was to suffer** - Paul was referencing the OT [Messianic Prophecies](#) that spoke of Messiah's suffering. See comments on Isaiah 53 (cf Ps 22:1-31)

**Suffer** (Only here in NT)([3805](#))(**pathetos** from [pascho](#)) one who has suffered or is subject to suffering. Friberg says "in the case of Christ destined to suffer." This adjective is the **first word in the Greek sentence** for emphasis.

**Longenecker** - Despite occasional claims to the contrary, there is no evidence that pre-Christian Judaism ever thought of the Messiah in terms of suffering....the proclamation of both a suffering Messiah and the resurrection of Jesus were distinctive to early Christianity. To these foundation tenets of the early faith, Paul, by revelation (cf. Gal 1:11-12; Eph 3:1-6), added the legitimacy of a

direct outreach to Gentiles. Indeed, such features of the Christian message went beyond the explicit beliefs and expectations of Judaism. But Paul's claim was that they were developments brought about by God himself to show the true intent of Israelite religion and in continuity with all that the prophets and Moses said would happen. (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

**The Christ** (5547) (**Christos** from **chrío** = to rub or anoint, consecrate to an office) means one who has been anointed, symbolizing appointment to a task. The majority of the NT uses refer to Jesus (exceptions = "false Christs" - Mt 24:24, Mk 13:22). The Messiah was prophesied to suffer even in the first mention of the "Gospel" (protoevangelium) - And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." (Ge 3:15-note)

#### Related Resources:

- [Messiah - Anointed One](#)
- [What is the passion \(suffering\) of Christ?](#)

**And that by reason of His resurrection from the dead**- This is the Gospel in a nutshell (cp 1 Co 15:3-4) - Messiah's death, burial (implied) and resurrection from the dead. See Ps. 16:10; Acts 13:30–37.

**NOTE:** The NAS is not a good translation here for it suggests Jesus was the **first** to proclaim. The other versions uniformly render it that Jesus was the first to rise from the dead. Christ's resurrection is the first of many more to come in the general resurrection and is a kind of first-fruits of the future harvest. There were other resurrections (e.g., Lazarus) but so Christ's resurrection is "**first**" in that it was the foremost, the most important, the most prominent. The related word firstborn ([prototokos](#)) describes His [primacy](#) in the resurrection...

1 Corinthians 15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the **first fruits** of those who are asleep.

Col. 1:15–16<sup>+</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn** ([prototokos](#)) of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Rev. 1:5<sup>+</sup> and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the **firstborn** ([prototokos](#)) of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—See 1 Cor. 15:20; ;

**Resurrection** (386) (**anastasis** from **ana** = up, again + **histemi** = to cause to stand) literally means "to stand again" or "to cause to stand again" and most NT uses refer to a physical body rising from the dead or coming back to life after having once died. The **resurrection** is distinguished from [reincarnation](#), which is imaginatively said to involve a series of rebirths from which the soul may seek release. **Resurrection** has primary reference to the body. The **resurrection** is the central, defining doctrine and claim of the gospel for as Paul wrote "if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain." (1Cor 15:14)

**Anastasis in Acts** - Acts 1:22; Acts 2:31; Acts 4:2; Acts 4:33; Acts 17:18; Acts 17:32; Acts 23:6; Acts 23:8; Acts 24:15; Acts 24:21; Acts 26:23;

#### Related Resources:

- [Why is the resurrection of Jesus Christ important?](#)
- [Why is the truth of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ so important?](#)
- [When will the Resurrection take place?](#)
- [Why should I believe in Christ's resurrection?](#)
- [What is the first resurrection? What is the second resurrection?](#)
- [Is the resurrection of Jesus Christ true?](#)
- [What is more important, the death of Christ or His resurrection?](#)

**NET Note** - Note how the context of Paul's gospel message about Jesus, resurrection, and light both to Jews and to the Gentiles is rooted in the prophetic message of the OT scriptures. Paul was guilty of following God's call and preaching the scriptural hope.

**To proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles**- Simeon (Lk 2:25+) describes Christ as "A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel." (Lk 2:32+)

**Isaiah** prophesies of the light that the Messiah will bring

Isaiah 9:1-2+ But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the



sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. 2 The people who walk in darkness Will see a great **light**; Those who live in a dark land, The **light** will shine on them

Isaiah 42:6 "I am the LORD, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a **light** to the nations,

Isaiah 49:6 He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

**Proclaim** ([present tense](#))(2605)([kataggello](#) from **kata** = an intensifier, down + **aggelos** = messenger and **aggello** = to declare, report) literally means to "declare down". It means to announce, with focus upon the extent to which the announcement or proclamation extends and so to proclaim throughout implying broad dissemination.. It means to declare plainly, openly and loudly! It was used of solemn religious messages.

**Light** ([5457](#) [phos](#)) is used figuratively here to describe divine illumination or understanding given to the spirit and soul of human beings (Mt 4.16)

**Phos** in Acts - Acts 9:3; Acts 12:7; Acts 13:47; Acts 16:29; Acts 22:6; Acts 22:9; Acts 22:11; Acts 26:13; Acts 26:18; Acts 26:23

**THOUGHT** - Paul loved to tell the story. **Do you love to tell the story? When was the last time you intentionally spoke to an unsaved soul about Jesus?** This is a privilege you will have only in the short life, but one you can enjoy eternally, for very likely some that you tell the old, old story will be there with you forever! May God our Father grant us all Spirit filled boldness to tell the old, old story in Jesus' Name. Amen

**Katherine Hankey** wrote a great old hymn that should motivate all of us to tell the story...

#### [I love to tell the story](#)

Of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus and His glory,  
Of Jesus and His love.  
I love to tell the story,  
Because I know 'tis true;  
It satisfies my longings  
As nothing else can do.

#### **REFRAIN:**

*I love to tell the story,  
'Twill be my theme in glory  
To tell the old, old story  
of Jesus and His love.*

I love to tell the story;  
More wonderful it seems  
Than all the golden fancies  
Of all my golden dreams,  
I love to tell the story,  
It did so much for me;  
And that is just the reason  
I tell it now to thee.

I love to tell the story;  
'Tis pleasant to repeat  
What seems each time I tell it,  
More wonderfully sweet.  
I love to tell the story;  
For some have never heard  
The message of salvation  
From God's own holy Word.

I love to tell the story;  
For those who know it best

Seem hungering and thirsting  
To hear it like the rest.  
And when, in scenes of glory,  
I sing the new, new song,  
'Twill be the old, old story,  
That I have loved so long.

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## Robert Neighbour - Paul's Confession of Faith

- "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" (Acts 26:23).

There were three great truths that Paul preached. These he brings out in this epitome of his life, before King Agrippa. Let us notice them.

1. He preached Christ's death, "witnessing \* \* none other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer."

The poor sinner sitting under the ministry of Paul was sure to hear the way of salvation. He was not left to some stirring appeal for self-assertion or self-negation as the basis of salvation. Paul preached that Christ died for our sins. He gloried in the Cross of Christ. He preached with the Blood in the basin.

2. He preached Christ's resurrection. "And that He should be the first that should rise from the dead." Paul preached the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He preached it gladly, believingly and fearlessly. He preached it as the great joy note, and as the sustaining power of the Gospel. He preached that Christ should be the first that should rise; he preached of the resurrection that should follow. Paul never relegated the resurrection of Christ, the firstfruits, and the resurrection of saints, to an annual Easter discourse. He preached it always, preached it everywhere. He knew that apart from the resurrection, the Gospel lost its power; everything was staked in the resurrection of Christ; everything was in anticipation of the resurrection of believers.

3. He preached Christ's coming again.

(1) This is suggested in the words, "A light unto the people and to the Gentiles." "The people" refers to Israel, and "the Gentiles" refers to everybody else. To be sure there was a partial fulfillment of the shining of this light in the days of Paul, there is a larger fulfillment during the age in which we are now living, but the completed fulfillment waits the return of the Lord. This completed fulfillment the Apostle Paul preached. We know he preached it. Whether at Ephesus, at Thessalonica, or at Philippi, or, wherever he preached, Paul preached Christ — Christ coming again, and the blaze of light that shall then girdle the world.

(2) This is also suggested earlier in the chapter. In verses 6 and 7 we read, "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come." The Jewish fathers believed in the Messianic hope — They believed in the restoration of Israel to the land. When Paul was saved he saw how intimately related this promise was to the Second Coming of Christ. He became at once the herald of the Lord's return, and of His reign on the Davidic throne. The Second Coming of Christ held a large place in the ministry of Paul.

**Acts 26:24 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."**

NET Acts 26:24 As Paul was saying these things in his defense, Festus exclaimed loudly, "You have lost your mind, Paul! Your great learning is driving you insane!"

GNT Acts 26:24 Τατα δ ατο πολογουμ νου Φ στος μεγ λ τ φων φησιν, Μα ν , Πα λε· τ πολλ σε γρ μματ ε ς μαν αν περιτρ πει.

NLT Acts 26:24 Suddenly, Festus shouted, "Paul, you are insane. Too much study has made you crazy!"

KJV Acts 26:24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

ESV Acts 26:24 And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind."

CSB Acts 26:24 As he was making his defense this way, Festus exclaimed in a loud voice, "You're out of your mind, Paul! Too much study is driving you mad!"

NIV Acts 26:24 At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane."

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

NRS Acts 26:24 While he was making this defense, Festus exclaimed, "You are out of your mind, Paul! Too much learning is driving you insane!"

YLT Acts 26:24 And, he thus making a defence, Festus with a loud voice said, 'Thou art mad, Paul; much learning doth turn thee mad;'

NAB Acts 26:24 While Paul was so speaking in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, "You are mad, Paul; much learning is driving you mad."

NJB Acts 26:24 He had reached this point in his defence when Festus shouted out, 'Paul, you are out of your mind; all that learning of yours is driving you mad.'

GWN Acts 26:24 As Paul was defending himself in this way, Festus shouted, "Paul, you're crazy! Too much education is driving you crazy!"

BBE Acts 26:24 And when he made his answer in these words, Festus said in a loud voice, Paul, you are off your head; your great learning has made you unbalanced.

- **While paul was saying** Acts 22:1.
- **Festus.** Acts 17:32; 24:25; 25:19, 20.
- **Paul.** Acts 26:11. 2 Ki. 9:11. Jer 29:26. Ho. 9:7. Mk 3:21. Jn 8:48, 52; 10:20, 21. 1 Co. 1:23; 2:13, 14; 4:10. 2 Co. 5:13.
- [The Nature of Enthusiasm - John Wesley](#)
- [Paul and Festus - A Contrast - Bishop Lightfoot](#)
- [The Upper Classes - William Arnot](#)
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## **"PAUL YOU ARE CRAZY OVER THIS JESUS!"**

**While Paul was saying this in his defense** - The verb [apologeomai](#) means he was speaking in his own defense against charges that were false. **Apologia** was a technical word used in the Greek law courts and was used of an attorney who talked his client off from a charge preferred against him. In short it refers to a speech given in defense.

**Apologeomai** in NT- Lk. 12:11; Lk. 21:14; Acts 19:33; Acts 24:10; Acts 25:8; Acts 26:1; Acts 26:2; Acts 26:24; Rom. 2:15; 2 Co. 12:19

**Festus said in a loud voice** - The Greek is picturesque for it is "megas" and "phone" which pictures Festus as loud as a megaphone! Festus could not take any more spiritual "edification"! Surely the Holy Spirit was convicting Festus.

**Longenecker** comments that "no sensible Roman could believe in the resurrection of a man from the dead—and even if he did privately accept such a strange view, he would not allow it to interfere with his practical living or bring him into danger of death. Paul, Festus concluded, was so learned in his Jewish traditions that he had become utterly impractical. Such talk was the height of insanity. Down through the ages Festus's response has been echoed by men and women too trapped by the natural to be open to the supernatural, too confined by the "practical" to care about life everlasting." (EBC)

**John G. Butler** wrote, "Festus attacks the mind of Paul. Because Festus does not understand what Paul is saying, he insults the mentality of Paul. The problem, however, was not the mentality of Paul, but the spirituality of Festus."

**Jack Andrews** - The world without Jesus Christ is mad—they have no spiritual equilibrium or spiritual sense! Festus, in his human reasoning, states what he thinks is Paul's trouble. He thinks that Paul's extensive training and studying and learning has driven him mad. Festus is saying "Paul you are out of your mind! You are crazy!" "You are not making any sense!" The world has and will often think that sold out, heaven bound, Spirit filled Christians are crazy and mad! The family of the Lord Jesus thought He was out of His mind. (See Mk 3:20-21) My uncle would tell me when I first was saved that I was out of my mind. I was taking this religion thing too

far. He would mock at me and did not understand how and why I would turn my life over to Jesus Christ. (Jack Andrews Expository Studies – Understanding Acts - Volume 7)

**Paul, you are out of your mind** - This is the verb [mainomai](#) (and Festus uses [present tense](#) - continually) which means to be mad, insane, besides yourself, in a frenzy, not in your right mind, thinking and reasoning in a completely irrational manner. This verb pictures a person speaking and acting in such a way that they appear to others that they are "out of their mind" or "lost their senses." In fact each occurrence of **mainomai** in the New Testament uses the term as [hyperbole](#).

**Larkin** - Paul is preaching for a decision with convincing conviction, and the only way Festus can rationalize his rejection is to declare the messenger mad and his message gibberish. Festus's reaction is instructive for Luke's audience. Their initial response might well be the same. And how many today, with their "commonsense" approach to life, would react as Festus did? It is obviously not the response Paul or Luke is looking for. (The IVP New Testament Commentary Series – Acts)

**Mainomai** in NT - Jn. 10:20; Acts 12:15+; Acts 26:24; Acts 26:25; 1 Co. 14:23

**Robertson** - The enthusiasm of Paul was too much for Festus and then he had spoken of visions and resurrection from the dead (Acts 26:8+). "Thou art going mad" (linear [present](#)), Festus means.

**Gilbrant** notes that "Many of the Romans and Greeks followed philosophies which taught them to have a contempt for the body. This made the very idea of the resurrection of the body abhorrent to them. None of their mythologies or philosophies had any place for bodily resurrection." (Ibid)

**Guzik** quips that "The gospel, when properly proclaimed and lived, will make some people think we are crazy. Paul put it this way: the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing (1 Corinthians 1:18)."

**Your great learning is driving you mad.**" - "Is turning you around." **Gramma** is used in the plural here with the meaning "learning." And **great learning** = "many letters" probably referring to the OT Scriptures about which Paul had been speaking. **Robertson** notes that "Festus thought that Paul's "much learning" (= "many letters," cf. John 7:15 of Jesus) of the Hebrew Scriptures to which he had referred was turning his head to madness (wheels in his head) and he was going mad right before them all. The old word mania (our mania, frenzy, cf. maniac) occurs here only in N.T."

**Learning** ([1121](#))(**gramma**) that which is drawn or written, i.e. a letter of the Greek alphabet. **Louw-Nida** = Any kind of written document, whether in book or manuscript form, with focus upon the content. a written statement of financial accounts, especially of debts ("promissory note") (Lk 16:6).

**Gilbrant on gramma** - This versatile term appears throughout antiquity in a wide variety of contexts. Basically it means a "letter" (of the alphabet), but its range of definition includes "musical notes," a "list," "a rule or law," "papers" in general, a "letter," a "book," and so on. In a plural form it can even denote "learnings" (i.e., "to have 'letters' " is to be educated; cf. the common phrase in antiquity, grammata mē eidotos, "not knowing letters," i.e., "illiterate"). (See for above Liddell-Scott; Moulton-Milligan.) Apparently hiera grammata ("sacred letters/writings") was used of imperial decrees or letters. This sense is not far from the use of the identical phrase used by Hellenistic Jews for the Old Testament writings (Moulton-Milligan; cf. 2 Timothy 3:15). Essentially two Hebrew expressions stand behind gramma in the Septuagint: forms of kāthav ("to write") and sēpher ("letter"). It concerns the "inscription" on the diadem of the high priest in Exodus 39:30 (LXX 36:39) which read, "HOLY TO THE LORD" (NIV). The Israelites were cautioned against putting "tattoo marks" (NIV, "grammata stikta") on their bodies (Leviticus 19:28). Joshua spoke of (literally) a "city of letters" (Hebrew Kirjath-sepher) given to Caleb (Joshua 15:15,16; cf. Judges 1:11). Gramma concerns an "edict" or "decree" in Esther 4:3 (cf. 4:8; 6:1,2; 8:5; etc.). In Isaiah both reader ("knowing letters") and nonreader ("not knowing letters") alike found excuses for not reading/ listening to the prophetic words of Isaiah (Isaiah 29:11,12). Thus in the Septuagint gramma further demonstrates the versatility first evident in the classical usage. Fifteen instances of gramma occur in the Greek New Testament. Paul commented about the large "letters" he himself wrote, perhaps in contrast to the smaller, more precise letters of his scribe (Galatians 6:11). In typical commercial language (see Moulton-Milligan) Luke recorded the Parable of the Shrewd Manager who asked for a "bill" from his master's clients (Luke 16:6,7). Both John and Luke used gramma as a symbol for education itself (John 7:15; cf. Acts 26:24). John also linked the expression "letters/writings" to Moses; however, whether or not he explicitly connected this with the Law cannot be verified (John 7:15). Paul, though, was different. Of Paul's eight uses, seven are clearly allusions to the Law, and in almost every case gramma (Law) contrasts pneuma (4011), "Spirit" (cf. Romans 2:29; 7:6; 2 Corinthians 3:6 twice; 3:7). The Jews held so tightly to what "the letter of the Law" stated that the Law became a hindrance to the practice of true religion. The contrast between Law/letter and Spirit is lacking in 2 Timothy 3:15; moreover, hiera grammata ("sacred writings") is a positive expression for the Old Testament (see above). ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Gramma** - 13x in 12v - bill (2), learning (1), letter (5), letters (3), writings (2).

Lk. 16:6; Lk. 16:7; Jn. 5:47; Acts 26:24; Acts 28:21+; Ro 2:27; Ro 2:29; Ro 7:6; 2 Co. 3:6; 2 Co. 3:7; Gal. 6:11;

**Grammar** in the Septuagint -

Ex. 39:30; Lev. 19:28; Jos. 15:15; Jos. 15:16; Jos. 15:49; Jos. 21:29; Jdg. 1:11; Jdg. 1:12; Est. 4:3; Est. 6:1; Est. 6:2; Est. 8:5; Est. 8:10; Est. 8:12; Est. 9:1; Isa. 29:11; Isa. 29:12; Dan. 1:4

**Driving** (only here in NT)(**peritrepo** from **peri** = about + **trope** = a turning) means "to turn from one state to its opposite" (BDAG) To turn about or upside down, to overturn. In the NT, used figuratively, to turn about into any state, to cause to become something, to make, followed by eis, into, as in Acts 26:24, meaning turns one about into madness or makes one insane." (Zodhiates) **Peritrepo** is used extensively in classical Greek to denote any number of situations involving a complete change or something totally opposite.

**Mad** (only here in NT)(3130)(**mania** from **mainomai**) means Mania, madness, insanity. **BDAG** - frenzy, delirium. Freq. in a non-diagnostic sense of eccentric or bizarre behavior in word or action."

**Gilbrant on mania** - The classical meaning of mania is "madness" or "frenzy." It is also used in a general sense of "mad passion," "rage," or "fury." There are occasions when it is used specifically for "enthusiasm" or "bacchic frenzy." In the Second Century B.C. it also denoted "delirium" and at times a weakened sense of "eccentricity," "queerness," or "excitement." Thus is it found in this unedited Tebtunis papyrus: "You seem to have gone mad, for you pay no regard to yourself and have gone off your head" (Moulton-Milligan). It is in this somewhat weakened sense that the only use of mania appears in the New Testament in Acts 26:24. The reader is helped in understanding the meaning of the term as Luke in the next verse expressed the opposite as being "truth" and "sobriety." "Truth" denotes absolutes and reality, and "sobriety" conveys rationality and mental soundness as a Christian manifests this nature in good judgment and self-control. The heathen governor Festus found Paul's witness to the gospel, including the Resurrection, difficult to comprehend. He was forced to the conclusion that the prisoner's mind had become affected. Actually, Festus was the one with a confused mind, not Paul. However, to Festus it all made no sense. There was only one word for it, mania. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**NET Note** - The expression "You have lost your mind" would be said to someone who speaks incredible things, in the opinion of the hearer. Paul's mention of the resurrection (v. 23) was probably what prompted Festus to say this.

**MacArthur** observes that "**Festus** had listened with growing bewilderment as Paul continued speaking in his own defense. Paul was obviously a learned and brilliant man, so how could he believe what he was saying was really true? Did he really think that Jesus of Nazareth, a man executed under one of Festus' predecessors as governor, Pilate, was alive and had spoken to him? Finally, Paul's explicit declaration of Christ's resurrection was too much for Festus' rational sensibilities....Every intelligent Roman knew that dead men do not come back to life and talk to people; therefore, Paul's mental musings must have caused him to lose touch with reality." (Ibid)

**Warren Wiersbe** - In his message in the temple, when Paul got to the word **Gentiles**, the crowd exploded (Acts 22:21-22). That is the word Paul spoke (Acts 26:23) when **Festus** responded and loudly accused Paul of being mad. How strange that Festus did not think Paul was mad when he was persecuting the church! (Acts 26:11) Nobody called **D.L. Moody** crazy when he was energetically selling shoes and making money, but when he started winning souls, people gave him the nickname "**Crazy Moody**." This was not the first time Paul had been called "crazy" (2 Cor. 5:13), and he was only following in the footsteps of his Master (Mark 3:20-21; John 10:20). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Oliver Cromwell** - Does a man speak foolishly? — suffer him gladly, for you are wise. Does he speak erroneously? — stop such a man's mouth with sound words which cannot be gainsaid. Does he speak truly? — rejoice in the truth.

Paul explained why unredeemed men like Festus would think he was crazy writing that...

the word of the cross is **foolishness** to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.(1 Cor 1:18)

**Acts 26:24-32 Gentle Persuasion**

By David C. Egner

We urge you . . . that you may walk properly toward those who are outside. —1 Thessalonians 4:10-12

While teaching a college writing class, I used a textbook based on Aristotle's classic work Art of Rhetoric. He outlined three forms of persuasion that can apply to the way we witness to others about Christ.

1. Ethos (character). Henry Stanley said of Scottish missionary and explorer David Livingstone, "He never tried to convert me, but if I had been with him any longer I would have become a Christian." When people around us see the reality of Christ in our lives (1 Thessalonians 4:12), our words are taken more seriously.

2. Pathos (feeling). While touring Europe, a group of students from a Christian college witnessed to their busdriver. One girl tearfully pleaded, "If you don't accept Jesus, you'll go to hell. Please, please trust in Jesus." That reminds me of Paul's impassioned plea and its effect on King Agrippa (Acts 26:28).

3. Logos (reason). When we live a holy life, we will attract attention. This will lead to questions. It's then that we are to be ready to give reasons for what we believe, and we are to do so gently and humbly (1 Peter 3:15).

Is God leading you to witness to someone? Ask for His help. One, two, or all three of these classic methods may help open the door of that person's heart. —DCE

Thinking It Over

Why is your character so crucial to your witness?

Do nonbelievers sense your compassion for them?

Why do you believe in Christ? Have you told anyone?

When you know Christ, you want others to know Him too.

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**D L Moody - AKA "Crazy Moody"** - While in Boston, D. L. Moody became a Christian under his Sunday school teacher's guidance. When Moody was in Chicago, he found a church on the North side where he could feel at home. Over time Dwight started working with the ragamuffin boys in the neighborhood. He would go around every Sunday with candy and prizes to get the boys to come to the Wells Street mission Sunday school class. The class grew very much, so it was moved to hall where there were dances the night before. Moody had to wake up early to clean the hall before he would go and get the children to come to the class. People called Moody crazy because he was not afraid to act "crazy" to the children, so he can relate to them. Moody had over 1,000 students at one time (George). D. L. Moody was sometimes considered more of a child than any of his own class, so some people thought the name of "Crazy Moody" was accurate.

Mr. Moody knew a man that only had a short time to live. This man was worried about his own Sunday school class because none of the girls made a decision for Christ to come into their lives in a personal way. Moody and this man went to each girl's house and explained the plan of salvation to them. Afterwards, every girl in the class accepted Christ as her savior. This man was told to leave the Lake Michigan area and go to New York by his Doctor. Before the man left for New York, the class with Moody met for tea. At the end, each girl prayed for her dying teacher. These prayers spoke to Moody; he had a dilemma – to go into the ministry full-time or not. Three months later, he decided to quit selling shoes and go into the ministry full-time because of the influence of those girls. Some people did not think that a layman can do the job of an ordained minister, but Moody did not let them stop him for sharing God's love. During the Civil War, Moody was not willing to fight in the war, but he ministered to the soldiers. At some of the wars, he was at the front line with the men and women. Some people would still call him "Crazy Moody" for being on the front line, but Moody wanted to share the love of God wherever God led him.

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### **Christian Enthusiasm, its Reasonableness**

Once, at Wotton, Rowland Hill was carried away by the impetuous rush of his feelings, and exclaimed, "Because I am in earnest men call me an enthusiast, but I am not; mine are the words of truth and soberness. I once saw a gravel pit fall in, and bury three human beings alive. I shouted so loud for help that I was heard at the distance of a mile; help came, and rescued two of the poor sufferers. No one called me an enthusiast then; and when I see eternal destruction ready to fall on poor sinners, and about to entomb them irrecoverably in an eternal mass of woe, and call aloud on them to escape, shall I be called an enthusiast now?"

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### **A Preacher's Sanity Questioned Acts 26:24-25**

And as he thus spoke for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, you are beside yourself; much learning does make you mad. ...

When Dr. Chalmers was converted, the change in his ministry was quickly apparent to all. The rationalists, to whose class he had belonged, commonly said: "Tom Chalmers is mad." Some years after, when he was settled in Glasgow, a lady and gentleman on their way to hear him met a friend, who asked where they were going. On being told, he said, "What! to hear that madman?" They persuaded him to go for once and do the same, promising never to dispute with him about that title again, if he were inclined to apply it to the preacher after his sermon. To the surprise of all three, when Dr. Chalmers gave out his text, it was, "I am not mad, most noble Felix, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." The sceptical hearer was not only convinced of the preacher's sanity, but he was likewise converted to faith in Evangelical truth.

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### **Evangelistic Madness of John Berridge - Acts 26:24**



And as he thus spoke for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, you are beside yourself; much learning does make you mad. ...

As soon as John Berridge, of Everton, began to preach in a different strain from the neighbouring clergy they felt hurt at the emptiness of their own churches and the fulness of his. The squire, too, was much offended; he did not like to see so many strangers, and be so incommoded, and endeavoured to turn Mr. Berridge out of his living by a complaint to his bishop. Berridge being sent for by his lordship, was accosted thus: "Well, Berridge, they tell me you go about preaching out of your own parish; did I institute you to any other than Everton?" "No, my lord." "Well, then, you preach where you have no right to." "It is true, my lord; I remember seeing five or six clergyman out of their own parishes playing at bowls." "Pho, if you do not desist, you will very likely be sent to Huntingdon jail." "As to that, my lord, I have no greater liking to a jail than other people; but I had rather go there with a good conscience, than be at liberty with a bad one." Here his lordship, looking hard at Berridge, gravely assured him, "**he was beside himself**, and that in a few months he would be better or worse." "Then," said he, "my lord, you may make yourself easy in this business; for if I am better, you must suppose I shall desist of my own accord; and if worse, you need not send me to jail, as I shaft be provided with an accommodation in Bedlam. (Ed: Lord God, may his tribe increase. Amen!)

If you don't know John Berridge, you need to meet him now as he will be near the front in heaven and it will take a while to hear his great stories! - Read [John Berridge Biography](#)

Here is my favorite John Berridge hymn that has been put to music...JESUS CAST A LOOK ON ME

- [Demo Mp3 by Michael Perryman Jones](#)
- [Play Red Mountain Music's full version on youtube](#)

1. Jesus cast a look on me,  
Give me sweet simplicity  
Make me poor and keep me low,  
Seeking only Thee to know

2. All that feeds my busy pride,  
Cast it evermore aside  
Bid my will to Thine submit,  
Lay me humbly at Thy feet

3. Make me like a little child,  
Of my strength and wisdom spoiled  
Seeing only in Thy light,  
Walking only in Thy might

4. Leaning on Thy loving breast,  
Where a weary soul can rest  
Feeling well the peace of God,  
Flowing from His precious blood

5. In this posture let me live,  
And hosannas daily give  
In this temper let me die,  
And hosannas ever cry!

**Acts 26:25 But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth.**

Amplified - But Paul replied, I am not mad, most noble Festus, but I am uttering the straight, sound truth.

NET Acts 26:25 But Paul replied, "I have not lost my mind, most excellent Festus, but am speaking true and rational words.

GNT Acts 26:25 ὁ Παῖς, ὁ μανομαι, φησιν, κριστε Φστε, ἀλλήθεας κα σωφροσνης ματα ποφθ γγομαι.

NLT Acts 26:25 But Paul replied, "I am not insane, Most Excellent Festus. What I am saying is the sober truth.

KJV Acts 26:25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

ESV Acts 26:25 But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words.

CSB Acts 26:25 But Paul replied, "I'm not out of my mind, most excellent Festus. On the contrary, I'm speaking words of truth and good judgment.

NIV Acts 26:25 "I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable.

NKJ Acts 26:25 But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason.

NRS Acts 26:25 But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking the sober truth.

YLT Acts 26:25 and he saith, 'I am not mad, most noble Festus, but of truth and soberness the sayings I speak forth;

NAB Acts 26:25 But Paul replied, "I am not mad, most excellent Festus; I am speaking words of truth and reason.

NJB Acts 26:25 But Paul answered, 'Festus, your Excellency, I am not mad: I am speaking words of sober truth and good sense.

GWN Acts 26:25 Paul replied, "I'm not crazy, Your Excellency Festus. What I'm saying is true and sane.

BBE Acts 26:25 Then Paul said, I am not off my head, most noble Festus, but my words are true and wise.

- **I am not out of my mind** Jn 8:49. 1 Pe. 2:21–23; 3:9, 15.
- **most excellent Festus** Acts 23:26. Gr.; Acts 24:3. Lu. 1:3. Titus 1:9; 2:7, 8.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## PAUL IS OF SOUND MIND NOT OUT OF HIS MIND

**But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth-** "true and rational words." He was speaking **sober truth** the antithesis of madness! NLT - "I am not insane, Most Excellent Festus. What I am saying is the sober truth."

**Kent Hughes** said, "True sanity lies with the Paul's of this world— those who build their lives on the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is mad to live, as the majority does, as though ultimate reality resides in what we can see, taste, and touch."

**Out of my mind** (Acts 26:24)([3105](#))([mainomai](#) gives us our English "maniac") to rage, rave, be mad. This verb pictures a person speaking and acting in such a way that they appear to others that they are "out of their mind" or "lost their senses."

**Words**([4487](#))([rhema](#) from verb [rheo](#) = to speak) refers to the spoken word, especially a word as uttered by a living voice. **Rhema** refers to any sound produced by the voice which has a definite meaning. It focuses upon the content of the communication. **Rhema** is used in the great passage in Luke 1:37+ which in the old 1901 ASV reads more accurately "For no word (rhema) from God shall be void of power." Literally, "No word of God can fail." The spoken words of Peter inspired by the Spirit and empowered by the Spirit would not fail for they were full of power!

**Rhema in Acts** - Acts 2:14; Acts 5:20; Acts 5:32; Acts 6:11; Acts 10:22; Acts 10:37; Acts 10:44; Acts 11:14; Acts 11:16; Acts 13:42; Acts 16:38; Acts 26:25; Acts 28:25;

**Sober**([4997](#))([sophrosune](#) from [sophron](#) = of sound mind, self-controlled) means mental soundness, a rationality (Acts 26:25) and good judgment, especially practice of [prudence](#) (ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason), moderation moderation of desires, passions, or conduct. **Louw-Nida** = to have understanding about practical matters and thus be able to act sensibly. **Friberg** on **sophrosune** - (1) as a quality of life characterized by the ability to restrain passions and impulses self-control,

moderation, sensibleness ( 1Ti 2:9); (2) as intellectual soundness rationality, reasonableness, good sense (Acts 26:25) (Analytical Lexicon) **Liddell-Scott** on **sophrosune** - 1. soundness of mind, moderation, discretion, Od., Theogn., Att. 2. moderation in desires, self-control, temperance, chastity, sobriety, Lat. temperantia, modestia,

**Sophrosune** - 3x discreetly(1), self-restraint(1), sober(1).

Acts 26:25 But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of **sober** truth.

1 Timothy 2:9 Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and **discreetly**, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments,

1 Timothy 2:15 But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with **self-restraint**.

**Gilbrant** on **sophrosune** - **Sōphrosunē** is a contraction of saophrosunē found in Homer (Eighth Century B.C.). Its etymological meaning is "of sound mind," a combination of **saos** ("sound, whole, healthy") and **phrenes** ("mind"). In classical Greek it could denote the "rational," what is "intellectually sound," or "discretion," i.e., moderation and self-control (Luck, "sōphrōn," Kittel, 7:1097). Philosophers wrangled over the exact definition of sōphrosunē (Plato discussed it at length in his Charmides). In general, it refers "to a basic attitude which alone makes possible certain concrete modes of conduct" (Luck, *ibid.*, 7:1098). Its main manifestation is restraint, an effort to control one's emotions using reason. Thus, sōphrosunē is an attitude arising from within oneself and manifests itself in an outward life of moderation and self-control. An antonym in classical Greek is the word hubris (5036B), "lack of self-restraint," which reveals itself in greed, pride, gluttony, overstepping of bounds, etc. Sōphrosunē was expected of people in the Greek world. Following Plato the Stoics classified sōphrosunē as one of the four cardinal virtues of life. In popular philosophy these virtues could be subdivided into long lists of virtue and vices (*ibid.*, 7:1100). Sōphrosunē, when applied to women, meant self-control and restraint in sexual desires, and hence, "chastity." In the Septuagint sōphrosunē does not appear in the canonical books. According to Luck its main Hebrew equivalent is mūsār, "discipline, correction." (Mūsār is generally translated paideia [3672] in the Septuagint.) An analysis of mūsār, however, shows a profound difference in emphasis from sōphrosunē. According to Gilchrist mūsār denotes "correction which results in education." The theological basis for mūsār is "grounded in the covenant relationship which Yahweh establishes with His people." It is "education that is theocentric," and "mūsār primarily points to a God-centered way of life, and only secondarily to ethical behavior" (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, "yāšār"). Thus, mūsār is restraint and discipline that originates from without, while Greek understanding of sōphrosunē arises from within. The translators of the Septuagint thus avoided the use of **sōphrosunē** (and its cognates, none of which appear in canonical books). Sōphrosunē only appears "in texts extant in Greek alone or giving clear evidence of Hellenistic influence" (Luck, "sōphrōn," Kittel, 7:1100). In Philo sōphrosunē has its normal Hellenistic usage. In the noncanonical books of the Septuagint **sōphrosunē** appears nine times. In Esther 3:13 (**Septuagint** only) it is (according to Artaxerxes) a quality of Haman. He has "sound judgment" (RSV). In Wisdom of Solomon 8:7 it appears with Plato's other cardinal virtues as a product of the teaching of personified Wisdom. The writer has combined Greek and Jewish concepts. **Sōphrosunē** is the result of having wisdom; wisdom is attained through instruction (paideia, 6:17). **Sōphrosunē** appears six times in the highly Stoic 4 Maccabees. The Greek understanding of the word predominates. Emotions hinder **sōphrosunē** (1:3). The writer refers to the four cardinal virtues in 1:6,18. He calls these virtues "kinds of wisdom" (1:18, RSV). Reason (logismos [3027]) rules over the emotions through "the restraining power of self-control" (1:30, RSV). He defines **sōphrosunē** as "mastery over desires" (1:31). The writer shows his Jewish adherence to the Law when he attributes the attainment of the virtues to study of the Law (5:16-24). Via **sōphrosunē** the Jew can "master all pleasures and desires" (verse 23, RSV). Thus, **sōphrosunē** becomes a virtue which results from instruction in the Law. In the New Testament the word group "plays a comparatively minor role." It is "chiefly used to characterize Christian life in the world" (Luck, "sōphrōn," Kittel, 7:1102f.). Paul employed this noun when he stood before Agrippa as well as before Festus who interrupted the speaker's defense by accusing him of being out of his mind. He acknowledged the apostle's abundant learning and even claimed Paul was insane precisely because of his constant study of the Scriptures. Festus' implication was that Paul was confused because of the nature of what he studied. The apostle countered this impugning of the Old Testament by claiming that what he studied consisted of words of truth and words of soberness (sōphrosunē); that is, words that produced mental soundness, rationality, and self-control (Acts 26:25). This crucial term also occurs in Paul's first epistle to his spiritual son Timothy. After giving instructions concerning public worship Paul instructed women to dress orderly, kosmiō (see 2860), a term which comes from the same Greek noun kosmos (2862) which means "world." The idea is that the outward apparel should be arranged in an orderly fashion so it reflects the orderly arrangement of the redeemed soul. If this is done the clothing will manifest two things: (1) modesty, a quality which does not unnecessarily expose the human body so as to draw undue attention to itself; and (2) sobriety (sōphrosunē), which has to do with a soundness of mind that reflects scriptural discretion and chastity (1 Timothy 2:9). ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Utter** (declare)([present tense](#)) (669)([apophtheggomai](#) from **apo** = from + **phtheggomai** = to utter in Acts 4:18, 2 Pe 2:16, 18) means to speak, utter, declare. The word utter means to articulate audibly, either verbally or with a cry, shout, or noise. Utter is the same Greek word used in Acts 2:4+ where the 120 spoke in other tongues as the Spirit gave "utterance", and which is used also in Acts 2:14+ where Peter proclaimed (uttered forth) a message that was the expression of gift given by the Holy

Spirit. **Robertson** - Lucian uses it (apophtheggorai) of the ring of a vessel when it strikes a reef. It is used of eager, elevated, impassioned utterance. It occurs three times in Vettius Valens in a "mantic" sense. Paul was not ruffled by the rude and excited interruption of Festus, but speaks with perfect courtesy in his reply "words of truth and soberness."

**Truth** (225)(**aletheia** from **a** = indicates following word has the opposite meaning ~ without + **lanthano** = to be hidden or concealed, to escape notice, cp our English "*latent*" from Latin = to lie hidden) has the literal sense of that which contains nothing hidden. **Aletheia** is that which is not concealed. **Aletheia** is that which that is seen or expressed as it really is (this idea is discussed more below).

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#### **A Moral Duel - Homilist Acts 26:24-25**

And as he thus spoke for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, you are beside yourself; much learning does make you mad.

...

Concerning the two duellists in the text, notice —

1. Both were signally able men. The speech of Festus (see Acts 25:27) shows this, and the high position to which his abilities had raised him. Paul was not less able, but even more so.
2. Both were well known.
3. Both had distinguished spectators. There were present Agrippa, the king, "the chief captains," and the principal men of the city."

I. AS SECULARISM REPRESENTED IN THE ATTACK OF THE ONE. Festus was a man of the world, a worldling, a strong, enlightened, talented secularist. Two remarks concerning this attack.

1. It was dealt out by a man of distinguished power.
2. It was prompted by motives that seemed reasonable.

II. AS CHRISTIANITY REPRESENTED IN THE DEFENCE OF THE OTHER. Two remarks are suggested.

1. The defence was direct. Paul says, "I am not mad."
2. The defence was rational. He says, "I speak forth the words of truth and soberness."
3. The defence was respectful. Paul addresses his accuser as "most noble [R.V., excellent] Festus."

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#### **Acts 26:19-32 Who's Mad Here? By Mart De Haan**

[Paul] said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason.. —Acts 26:25

In his book **Whatever Became Of Sin?** Karl Menninger writes, "On a sunny day in September 1972, a stern-faced, plainly dressed man could be seen standing still on a street corner in the busy Chicago Loop. As pedestrians hurried by on their way to lunch or business, he would solemnly lift his right arm, point to the person nearest him, and intone loudly the single word, '**Guilty!**' Then, without any change of expression, he would resume his stiff stance for a few moments before repeating the gesture." The effect of this action on passing strangers was almost eerie. They would stare at their accuser, hesitate momentarily, turn away, look at him again, then hurriedly move on. If that man was crazy, as many thought, he was a madman telling the truth. Everyone he pointed to was guilty! Sin is universal (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23). The worst kind of insanity is to deny one's guilt while living in sin and unbelief. Festus, the Roman governor of Judea, accused the apostle Paul of being mad (Acts 26:24). But it was Festus who was out of touch with reality, for he rejected God's truth.

What about you? Have you acknowledged your guilt before God and turned in faith to Jesus as your Savior and Lord? It's madness not to.

How To Be Forgiven - Admit that you are guilty of sin. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for you and rose from the dead. In faith, ask the Lord Jesus Christ to save you. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

To deny one's guilt and reject Christ is the worst kind of insanity.

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#### **Acts 26:19-32 Mystery And Madness By Herbert Vander Lugt**

I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. —Acts 26:25

Bill is a successful businessman and a personal friend of mine. He loves to tell about the dramatic change in his life since he received Jesus as his Savior. Many people have been deeply impressed by Bill's testimony, but one man told me that he viewed it as

“emotional and irrational.” In fact, he implied that my sanity was open to question because I put so much stock in what Bill said.

This skeptic makes the same mistake that the Roman governor Festus made with Paul. Because Festus couldn't identify with the wonder of a life-changing encounter with Christ, he dismissed the apostle's testimony as irrational. Festus should have listened to Paul and admitted that the elements of mystery could very well be true. After all, Paul spoke with “truth and reason” (v.25), and his witness was verifiable—“this thing was not done in a corner” (v.26). As for Bill, his testimony is backed by 50 years of godly living.

God doesn't ask us to believe the absurd, but He does demand that we believe what He says in the Bible. Even when we don't fully comprehend God's ways, we can rely on the truth of His Word. And in His Word He promises to change our lives when we put our trust in Him. Don't confuse divine mystery with human madness. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Great works, Jehovah, You have wrought,  
Exceeding deep Your every thought;  
A foolish man knows not their worth,  
Nor he whose mind is of the earth.  
—Psalter

God's truth and human wisdom don't travel the same highway.

**Acts 26:26 "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.**

NET Acts 26:26 For the king knows about these things, and I am speaking freely to him, because I cannot believe that any of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner.

GNT Acts 26:26 π σταται γ ρ περ το των βασιλε ς πρ ς ν κα παρρησιαζ μενος λαλ , λανθ νειν γ ρ α τ ν [πι] το των ο πεθομαι ο θ ν· ο γ ρ σιν ν γων πεπραγμ νον το το.

NLT Acts 26:26 And King Agrippa knows about these things. I speak boldly, for I am sure these events are all familiar to him, for they were not done in a corner!

KJV Acts 26:26 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.

ESV Acts 26:26 For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner.

CSB Acts 26:26 For the king knows about these matters. It is to him I am actually speaking boldly. For I am convinced that none of these things escapes his notice, since this was not done in a corner.

NIV Acts 26:26 The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner.

NKJ Acts 26:26 "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.

NRS Acts 26:26 Indeed the king knows about these things, and to him I speak freely; for I am certain that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner.

YLT Acts 26:26 for the king doth know concerning these things, before whom also I speak boldly, for none of these things, I am persuaded, are hidden from him; for this thing hath not been done in a corner;

NAB Acts 26:26 The king knows about these matters and to him I speak boldly, for I cannot believe that (any) of this has escaped his notice; this was not done in a corner.

NJB Acts 26:26 The king understands these matters, and to him I now speak fearlessly. I am confident that nothing of all this comes as a surprise to him; after all, these things were not done in a corner.

GWN Acts 26:26 I can easily speak to a king who knows about these things. I'm sure that none of these things has escaped his attention. None of this was done secretly.

BBE Acts 26:26 For the king has knowledge of these things, to whom I am talking freely; being certain that all this is common knowledge to him; for it has not been done in secret.

- **the king.** Acts 26: 2, 3; Acts 25:22.
- **knows about these matters.** Acts 2:1–12; 4:16–21; 5:18–42. Isa 30:20. Mt 26:5; 27:29–54.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## AGRIPPA CANNOT CLAIM IGNORANCE

Agrippa's silence spoke volumes!

**For the king knows about these matters** - Paul turns to the king for support. What **matters**? Surely the matter of the resurrection in Acts 26:23! Agrippa would have heard about Jesus and by now the Gospel had been proclaimed all over Palestine for 30 years. King Agrippa does not refute Paul's statement. He had heard about this Jesus and the events that had taken place. In that sense Agrippa was even more accountable. Not only did he know but now he had been confronted face to face with the truth about Jesus Christ from a man who had personally encountered Jesus. He would not be rejecting hearsay or second hand knowledge but first hand witness. We do not know what happened to King Agrippa the rest of his life. Surely the Holy Spirit caused the words of this fateful encounter with Paul to come to mind again (if not many times) in his life. We will not know for certain until heaven whether he bowed his knee and received Jesus as Savior and Lord, but there is no record of this happening. Wikipedia reveals that "After the capture of Jerusalem (70 AD), he went with his sister Berenice to Rome, where he was invested with the dignity of [praetor](#) and rewarded with additional territory." If Agrippa steadfastly refused to be persuaded, then sadly he would be subject to an even greater degree of punishment for having spurned such a clear first hand witness. Jesus declared

"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. "Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you. (Mt 11:21-22)

**Comment:** Hell will be horrible because it is eternal exclusion from the glorious presence of God, but Jesus clearly teaches that for some it will be a greater degree of punishment than for others.

**Knows about** (understands)([1987](#))([epistamai](#)) means to fix one's mind on, have intellectual apprehension, to understand, to know (know well - Acts 18:25) or to be acquainted with (Acts 19:15). In the present passage Paul is saying that King Agrippa understands or comprehend (Mark 14:68; 1 Tim. 6:4; James 4:14; Jude 1:10).

**Epistamai** in Acts - Mk. 14:68; Acts 10:28; Acts 15:7; Acts 18:25; Acts 19:15; Acts 19:25; Acts 20:18; Acts 22:19; Acts 24:10; Acts 26:26;

**And I speak to him also with confidence** - He speaks freely, openly, fearlessly. This is a Spirit filled man with supernaturally enabled boldness!

**THOUGHT** - You can mark it down beloved. When you are filled with the Spirit, you are far more likely to give a witness for Christ, than if you are walking (and working) in your own natural strength, for you will be much more likely to fall into the snare of fear of man. Proverbs says "The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted." (Pr 29:25).

**Confidence** ([present tense](#) = continually with boldness) ([3955](#))([parrhesiazomai](#)) from **parrhesia** = freedom in speaking <> **pas** = all + **rhesis** = speech) means literally speaking out every word and conveys the idea of freedom to say all - speak freely, openly, boldly, fearlessly, without constraint. The Greeks used this word for speaking in a democratic assembly and this verb is always used in the NT of speaking. It means to be bold and courageous in one's speech reflecting an attitude of openness that comes from freedom and lack of fear. This part of the supernatural fruit of being filled with the Holy Spirit. For example in Acts 9:17 Ananias was sent by the Lord to Paul and said "the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And what do we see in Paul's witness as a result of being filled? Read on...

But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and **how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly** ([parrhesiazomai](#)) in the name of Jesus. And he was with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem, **speaking out boldly** ([parrhesiazomai](#)) in the name of the Lord. (Acts 9:27-28+)

**Confidence** or **boldness** is a key word in Acts so it is not surprising that most of the NT uses of [parrhesiazomai](#) are found in Acts - Acts 9:27; Acts 9:28; Acts 13:46; Acts 14:3; Acts 18:26; Acts 19:8; Acts 26:26; Eph. 6:20; 1 Th 2:2.



**THOUGHT** - Boldness of speech is clearly the fruit of a Spirit filled man or woman. Are you bold to speak up for and about the King of kings?

**Since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner** - It would be hard for a Jewish King who was headquartered in Jerusalem to be ignorant of the Man Jesus Christ and the events of His death and subsequent resurrection.

**I am persuaded** (I am trusting) (3982)(**peitho**) means to be convinced of something. **Peitho** is a strong verb, carrying the components of confidence, reliance, and hope. As **peitho** is used in this passage in the [passive voice](#), the idea is to be won over as the result of persuasion, to be persuaded, to believe. For other uses of **peitho** in the [passive voice](#) with this same sense see Acts 17:4, Acts 21:14, Acts 26:28 (see below), Acts 28:24 ("Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe.").

**Peitho** is used frequently in **Acts** -

Acts 5:36; Acts 5:37; Acts 5:40; Acts 12:20; Acts 13:43; Acts 14:19; Acts 17:4; Acts 18:4; Acts 19:8; Acts 19:26; Acts 21:14; Acts 23:21; Acts 26:26; Acts 26:28; Acts 27:11; Acts 28:23; Acts 28:24

**I am persuaded** (3982)(**peitho**)

**Escape...notice** (2990) (**lanthano**) means to lie hidden, concealed, to be unknown. To be hidden from someone, to escape his knowledge or notice (Acts 26:26; 2 Pet. 3:5, 8). **Zodhiates** says "Joined with the participle of another verb, it has the force of an adverb meaning secretly, unawares (Heb. 13:2)."

**BDAG** - "to succeed in avoiding attention or awareness (escape notice, be hidden)."

**Louw-Nida** - (1) to cause oneself to not be known, with the implication of concealment and secrecy - 'to escape notice, to remain hidden.' (Mk 7:24) (2) to not recall information and thus to lose sight of its significance - 'to forget, to not remember, to lose sight of, to ignore (2 Pe 3:5, 8) (3) to not have knowledge about or to be unaware of something, with the implication that something can readily escape notice or be hidden - 'to be unaware of, to not know.' (Heb 13:2).

**Friberg** on **lanthano** - (1) as causing oneself to remain unknown or unrecognized = escape notice, be hidden (Lk 8:47); (2) as not having knowledge of something, followed by a participle be unaware of, be ignorant of (Heb 13:2); (3) as failing to remain aware of the significance of something, followed by a *hoti* clause = ignore, forget (2 Pe 3:5, 8)

**Gilbrant** - **Lanthanō** appears in the Septuagint 17 times and expresses a variety of actions. For example, Leviticus 4:13; 5:3,4,15 use this verb to describe unintentional sins that are committed by a group or by an individual that are temporarily hidden from public attention. In contrast, Numbers 5:13 refers to an intentional sin that is deliberately hidden. In a sobering discussion of divine justice, Job 34:21 says that God observes all the sins of mankind (literally, "nothing of what they do has escaped Him"). In the New Testament **lanthanō** appears six times. It expresses the concept of physical concealment (i.e., someone or something is actually hidden) and the contrast between ignorance and knowledge (i.e., something is hidden or not hidden from the mind). The former meaning is seen in Mark 7:24 which records that Jesus could find no privacy from the crowds ("he could not be hid" or "escape notice"). The other five appearances of **lanthanō** illustrate the latter meaning. Luke 8:47 records that the touch of the woman with a hemorrhage did not escape Jesus' notice. By stating that "none of these things are hidden," Paul pointed to the public nature of the Gospel events (Acts 26:26). Those who practiced self-deception and willful ignorance were chastised in 2 Peter 3:5,8. Finally, Hebrews 13:2 observes that some people have entertained angels without knowing it ("unawares"). Although this verse alludes to Genesis 18:3; 19:2, the Greek world also believed in the possibility of conversing with angels who came to earth incognito. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Lanthano** - 6x in NT - escape...notice(2), escape notice(1), escaped notice(1), escapes...notice(1), without knowing(1).

Mk. 7:24; Lk. 8:47; Acts 26:26; Heb. 13:2; 2 Pet. 3:5; 2 Pet. 3:8

**Lanthano** in the **Septuagint** -

Lev. 4:13; Lev. 5:3; Lev. 5:4; Lev. 5:15; Nu 5:13; Nu 5:27; 2 Sam. 17:22; 2 Sam. 18:13; Job 24:1; Job 28:21; Job 34:21; Isa. 40:26;

**This has not been done in a corner** - Something done or not **done in a corner** was a Greek idiom used in Paul's day. (see [Plato Gorgias 485D](#) = "in a corner"; [Epictetus Dissertations 2, chapter 12](#) = "Well then; the matter is not now very safe, and particularly at Rome; for he who attempts to do it, **must not do it in a corner**,"). "Paul's point is that these events to which he refers were not done in a secret, hidden place, tucked away outside of view. They were done in public for all the world to see." (NET Note)

**Gilbrant** writes "Even the Pharisees recognized the tremendous effect of the teaching, ministry, and miracles of Jesus for they said, "Behold (look!), the world is gone after him" (John 12:19). The preaching of the gospel also had a tremendous effect, so much so that the unbelieving Jews and their conspirators accused Paul and Silas of turning the inhabited world upside down (Acts 17:6+). Truly, these things were "not done in a corner." King Agrippa could not help but know of them. (Complete Biblical Library – Acts)

**MacArthur** - Paul called Agrippa as a witness to his sanity, since the Jews believed in resurrection, and the matters of which the apostle spoke (the death of Jesus, and the claim of the Christians that He rose from the dead) were common knowledge in Palestine. By remaining silent, Agrippa confirmed the truth of what Paul said. (Ibid)

#### Acts 26:27 "King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do."

NET Acts 26:27 Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa? I know that you believe."

GNT Acts 26:27 πιστε εις, βασιλε γρ ππα, το ς προφ ταις; ο δα τι πιστε εις.

NLT Acts 26:27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do--"

KJV Acts 26:27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

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

CSB Acts 26:27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you believe."

NIV Acts 26:27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."

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

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

YLT Acts 26:27 thou dost believe, king Agrippa, the prophets? I have known that thou dost believe!"

NAB Acts 26:27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you believe."

NJB Acts 26:27 King Agrippa, do you believe in the prophets? I know you do.'

GWN Acts 26:27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you believe them!"

BBE Acts 26:27 King Agrippa, have you faith in the prophets? I am certain that you have.

- **believe.** Acts 26:22, 23.
- [Me A Christian - Alexander Maclaren - Acts 26:27-29](#)
- [Acts 26:27-29 The Almost Christian - S. Wilberforce.](#)
- [The Somewhat Christian Acts 26:27-29 - J. A. Broadus](#)
- [The Almost Christian - H. Kollock](#)
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

### DO YOU BELIEVE THE BIBLE?

**King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? ([prophetes](#)) I know that you do** - The prisoner becomes the interrogator, for indeed he is free while Agrippa is the one enslaved to sin (Ro 6:17+). While **the Prophets** were not God's full [revelation](#), they had enough Messianic prophecies that the Jewish Agrippa could have known about the suffering, saving Messiah. It is one thing to read the Bible, but quite another to believe the Bible or to have the Bible "read you!"

**NET Note** - Note how Paul made the issue believing the OT prophets and God's promise which God fulfilled in Christ. He was pushing King Agrippa toward a decision not for or against Paul's guilt of any crime, but concerning Paul's message.

**Do you believe the Prophets** - Paul alludes to what he had just stated in Acts 26:22-23 -

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**; 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.

**Believe** (4100) ([pisteuo](#) from [pistis](#); [pistos](#); related studies [the faith](#), the [obedience of faith](#)) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust.

**I know that you do** - Paul actually did not wait for the King to answer but answers for him. The Greek text repeats the verb **believe** ([pisteuo](#)) and so King Agrippa a Jew who was "an expert in all customs and questions among the Jews" (Acts 26:3+) did not argue or refute Paul on this statement!

**Robertson** - Paul had "cornered" Agrippa by this direct challenge. As the Jew in charge of the temple he was bound to confess his faith in the **prophets**. But Paul had interpreted the prophets about the Messiah in a way that fell in with his claim that Jesus was the Messiah risen from the dead. To say, "Yes" would place himself in Paul's hands. To say "No" would mean that he did not believe the prophets. Agrippa had listened with the keenest interest, but he slipped out of the coils with adroitness and a touch of humour. (I doubt if he is laughing now!)

**MacArthur** explains that "The implication was that if he did, he would have to concede that Jesus was the Messiah. Agrippa was stuck in a quandary. Admitting his belief in the prophets was tantamount to acknowledging Jesus as Messiah. That would make him look foolish before his Roman friends and outrage his Jewish subjects. Yet a Jewish king could hardly disavow the revered prophets of his people. Consequently, he avoided the question, mockingly replying instead (in Acts 26:28)." (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

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### Almost Saved -- But Lost

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

A boat went over the Niagara cataract with two men in it, leaving another clinging to a log which lay against a weir, just above the edge of the descending flood. The morning which rose upon the night of disaster revealed the imperilled man. Thousands gathered upon the banks of the river, and every invention was tried to save him. Lifeboats were swept away until the day began to decline. At length a frail skiff was brought by ropes from each shore to his side. Hope shed its light upon all faces, and shone on no feature so brightly as upon his who lifted his foot to step into the last means of rescue. With the footfall the boat shot upward and backward into the boiling waters, and then downward to the abyss of destruction below went the victim of pleasure. Almost saved! What agony of feeling that expression declares!

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### The Almost Christian G. Whitefield. Acts 26:27-29

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

I. WHAT IS MEANT BY AN ALMOST CHRISTIAN? One who wavers between Christ and the world.

II. WHY SO MANY ARE NO MORE THAN SUCH. Because of —

1. False notions of religion.
2. Servile fear of man.
3. Prevailing covetousness.
4. Love of pleasure.
5. Instability of character.

III. THE FOLLY AND DANGER OF SUCH A CONDITION. It is —

1. Ineffectual to salvation.
2. Prejudicial to others.
3. Ungrateful to Christ.

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### Acts 26:28 Agrippa replied to Paul, "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian."

GNT Acts 26:28 ὁ γὰρ ππας πρ σ τ ν Πα λον, ν λ γ με πε θεις Χριστιαν ν ποι σαι.

NLT Acts 26:28 Agrippa interrupted him. "Do you think you can persuade me to become a Christian so quickly?"

KJV Acts 26:28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

ESV Acts 26:28 And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?"

CSB Acts 26:28 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Are you going to persuade me to become a Christian so easily?"

NIV Acts 26:28 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"

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

NRS Acts 26:28 Agrippa said to Paul, "Are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian?"

YLT Acts 26:28 And Agrippa said unto Paul, 'In a little thou dost persuade me to become a Christian!'

NAB Acts 26:28 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You will soon persuade me to play the Christian."

NJB Acts 26:28 At this Agrippa said to Paul, 'A little more, and your arguments would make a Christian of me.'

GWN Acts 26:28 Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think you can quickly persuade me to become a Christian?"

BBE Acts 26:28 And Agrippa said to Paul, A little more and you will be making me a Christian.

- **Do you think you can persuade me.** Acts 26:29; Acts 24:25. Ezek 33:31. Mt 10:18. Mk 6:20; 10:17–22. 2 Co. 4:2. James 1:23, 24.
- [Me A Christian - Alexander Maclaren - Acts 26:27-29](#)
- [Acts 26:27-29 The Almost Christian - S. Wilberforce.](#)
- [The Somewhat Christian Acts 26:27-29 - J. A. Broadus](#)
- [The Almost Christian - H. Kollock](#)
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## ALMOST PERSUADED TO BELIEVE IN JESUS

**Agrippa replied to Paul, "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian."** - Most of the other versions turn this into a question rather than a declaration as in the NASB. The NLT reads "Agrippa interrupted him. "Do you think you can persuade me to become a Christian so quickly?"

**Longenecker** explains "Paul's direct question embarrassed Agrippa. He had his reputation to maintain before Festus and the other dignitaries. Whatever he may have thought about Paul's message personally, he was too worldly-wise to commit himself in public to what others thought was madness. So he parried Paul's question with his own clever, though rather inane, one: "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" (Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 9: John and Acts)

**A T Robertson** on the inaccuracy of the King James rendering - Authorized rendering (KJV) is impossible: "**Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.**" En oligōi does not mean "almost." That would require oligou, par' oligon, or dei oligou. It is not clear, however, precisely what en oligoi does mean. It may refer to time (in little time) or a short cut, but that does not suit well en megalōi in Acts 26:29. Tyndale and Crammer rendered it "somewhat" (in small measure or degree). There are, alas, many "somewhat" Christians. Most likely the idea is "in (or with) small effort you are trying to persuade (peitheis, conative present active indicative) me in order to make me a Christian." This takes the infinitive poiēsai to be purpose (Page renders it by "so as") and thus avoids trying to make poiēsai like genesthai (become). The aorist is punctiliar action for single act, not "perfect." The tone of Agrippa is ironical, but not unpleasant. He pushes it aside with a shrug of the shoulders. The use of "Christian" is natural here as in the other two instances (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16).

**Short** (3641)(**oligos**) is an adjective which can have several nuances (few, small, short).

**Oligos** in **Acts** - Acts 12:18; Acts 14:28; Acts 15:2; Acts 17:4; Acts 17:12; Acts 19:23; Acts 19:24; Acts 26:28; Acts 26:29; Acts 27:20

**Persuade** (convince) (3982)(**peitho**) means literally to induce by words to believe something (Acts 19:26, Mt 27:20).

**Christian** (5546)(**Christianos** from **Christós** = Christ from chrio = to anoint, so Christ = "Anointed One", 529 times in NT) (Christianos is used 3 times in the NT Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16) was the name of the disciples or followers of Christ first adopted at Antioch. The meaning of **Christianos** is not totally clear but seems to mean an adherent of Christ. Some think this is a diminutive form of Christos, meaning "**little Christ.**" Irregardless **Christianos** connects a believer with his Lord. In a real sense a **Christian** means bearing the name of Christ. There are some parallel constructions in the ancient language. Followers of Herod were known as "Herodians." Likewise those loyal to Caesar were known as "Caesarians." This appears to be the model on which

the name "Christian" was formed (see following note from Anchor)

#### Related Resources:

- [What is a Christian?](#)
- [How can I become a Christian?](#)
- [Questions about the Christian Life](#)

**NET Note** - The point is that Paul was trying to persuade Agrippa to accept his message. If Agrippa had let Paul persuade him, he would have converted to Christianity. The question "In such a short time are you persuading me to become a Christian?" was probably a ploy on Agrippa's part to deflect Paul from his call for a decision. Note also how the tables have turned: Agrippa was brought in to hear Paul's defense, and now ends up defending himself. The questioner is now being questioned.

**James Montgomery Boice** - Agrippa probably believed in the resurrection. But he had his position, and he just could not humble himself, acknowledging himself to be a sinner like anybody else, and receive Jesus Christ as his Savior. He was put on the spot—embarrassed, no doubt, before the governor. So he dodged the question. This is precisely what men and women do today. When the supernatural gospel of a crucified but risen Savior is proclaimed, a gospel that demands that we turn from sin and begin to show our conversion by good works, the world puts up barriers and rejects it for precisely these reasons: pride of intellect (like Festus) and pride of position (like Agrippa). **If you are not a Christian, isn't it true that when you look into your heart you find that those are the things that keep you from bowing to Jesus Christ? Think how foolish that is, since both intellect and position will eventually pass away. Jesus said, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?"** (Matt. 16:26). (An Expository Commentary – Acts)

**POSB** - The words of King Agrippa are known by Christians world-wide, having served as a basic text for preachers of every generation. Some translate King Agrippa as saying, "You expect to make me a Christian in so short a time." Others, "You almost persuaded me to be a Christian." Whatever King Agrippa meant, he was familiar with the Scripture and apparently was gripped by Paul's message. His interest was aroused by the possibility that Jesus really was the Jewish Messiah. He saw Paul's point, what Paul was after, and what he, the King, and all the others sitting there had to do. Paul was after them, out to lead them into belief and repentance toward the Lord Jesus. But note: interest and knowing what to do, even conviction, are not enough to save a person. (Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Acts)

**Longenecker** points out that "KJV's translation of Agrippa's reply to Paul, **"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian,"** has become one of the famous quotations in history. Countless sermons have been preached on it and a gospel hymn (See below and see [story behind the hymn](#)) inspired by it. Nevertheless, it is not what Agrippa said, nor is KJV's translation of Acts 26:29 what Paul said."

#### [Almost Persuaded](#)

Phillip Bliss

"Almost persuaded" now to believe;

"Almost persuaded" Christ to receive;

Seems now some soul to say,

"Go, Spirit, go Thy way,

Some more convenient day

on Thee I'll call.

**Talmage** - Paul saw two boats; one was called **Altogether** and the other **Almost**. He saw the Altogether go into port, flags flying, and he saw the Almost founder at sea. Not quite a Christian is to be no Christian at all.

**Broadus** writes - Many persons will be disturbed at being told that the "almost Christian," however common an object, is not found in this passage. Agrippa's celebrated saying is, in the Greek, quite ambiguous, and so is Paul's reply. No one can determine with certainty what is the real meaning. "Somewhat" is the most probable interpretation, and agrees best with the character of Agrippa. "In some measure," "somewhat," makes it a polite answer, expressing interest in what has been said, and a disposition to admit that Christianity has really some claims, especially as presented by so able a speaker. The "somewhat Christian" is oftener to be met with in our congregations than the "almost Christian." (Read more at [The Somewhat Christian Acts 26:27-29 - J. A. Broadus](#))

**Jack Andrews** - What is worse is to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and the message of salvation and the pardon of sins and to turn a deaf ear and a hardened heart toward God and His grace! John Bunyan (writer of Pilgrim's Progress) wrote, "There is a way to hell from the gates of heaven." Herschel Ford said, "The tragedy of Agrippa was the tragedy of 'the almost.' He almost repented of his sin, he almost accepted Christ, he almost became a child of God, he almost entered the kingdom of heaven. He missed heaven and glory because he was simply 'almost persuaded.'" Are you in the company of the almost or altogether? This was a tragic confession

by Agrippa that revealed his tragic condition. (Ibid)

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Lord Kenneth Clark, internationally known for his television series “Civilization, lived and died without faith in Jesus Christ. He admitted in his autobiography that while visiting a beautiful church, he had what he believed to be an overwhelming religious experience.

Clark wrote, “My whole being was irradiated by a kind of heavenly joy far more intense than anything I had known before.”

The “gloom of grace,” as he described it, created a problem. If he allowed himself to be influenced by it, he knew he would have to change; his family might think he had lost his mind, and maybe that intense joy would prove to be an illusion. So he concluded, ‘I was too deeply embedded in the world to change course.’ (Told by Jack Andrews)

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**Hymn Story** (By Robert J. Morgan) “No one in the history of gospel music is more revered than Philip P. Bliss, a gifted young musician who died tragically at the age of thirty- five in a train wreck. Just a year before his death—this hymn—which he wrote had a profound influence in his decision to give himself to full-time gospel ministry.

Philip, his wife Lucy, and their two children lived in Chicago where Philip worked for a publishing company, writing sacred and secular songs. He was considered a rising star on the American music scene. As time allowed, he also volunteered as a soloist and song leader in evangelist meetings. During a evangelistic meeting where Rev. Brundage was preaching Philip received inspiration to write this hymn. The evangelist quoted Acts 26:28 and he declared, “He who is almost persuaded is almost saved, and to be almost saved is to be entirely lost!” Those words struck Philip Bliss and led him to pen “Almost Persuaded.”

It was during an evangelistic campaign in Waukegan, Illinois that confirmed God’s call on Philip’s life to go into fulltime ministry. The meetings started slowly, but on March 26, 1871, as Philip sang his new hymn, “Almost Persuaded,” an unusual power swept over the crowd.

His wife Lucy later wrote, “In different parts of the house, sinners arose as he sang, presenting themselves for prayer, and souls that night rejoiced in Christ. Our hearts were very full, and a great responsibility was upon us.”

The next day, Philip made a formal commitment to the Lord to leave all secular concerns and engage himself in fulltime ministry. In the year left to him, Philip Bliss exerted a lasting influence on gospel music, singing multitudes into the Kingdom and writing many of the hymns we love today.” (Quoted by Jack Andrews)

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## **To Those Who are Almost Persuaded - C. H. Spurgeon. Acts 26:27-29**

- King Agrippa, believe you the prophets? I know that you believe....

### **I. THE GREAT OBJECT OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER’S PERSUASIONS.**

The apostle never persuaded Agrippa to be almost a Christian. Agrippa never was an almost-Christian, his life and character displayed a spirit very far removed from that condition. There is a great difference between being almost a Christian and being almost persuaded to be a Christian. A man who is almost an artist knows something of painting, but a man almost persuaded to be an artist may not even know the names of the colours. The preaching of the gospel minister should always have soul winning for its object. May it never be an object of ours to dazzle and astonish, but to persuade you to be Christians. Neither would the apostle have been content if he could have persuaded Agrippa to take the name of a Christian, or to be baptized as a Christian. His object was, that he might in very deed be a Christian. To seem is nothing, but to be is everything. Thus should we labour in seeking converts; the adoption of a certain dress or mode of speech is little; union with our denomination is almost as unimportant; the true embracing of Jesus as the Saviour of men is the vital matter. If you desire a definition of a Christian, the apostle has given you it in verse 18.

### **II. THE APOSTOLIC MANNER OF PERSUADING.**

1. Paul made constant appeals to Scripture. This ought to be a powerful argument with you. You believe the Bible to be true, and the Bible says that it is your highest wisdom to be a follower of Christ. If you did not believe the Bible, no argument drawn from it could have any force with you; but granted that you accept it as God’s Word, as Agrippa did, the apostolic form of reasoning from that Word ought to persuade your hearts.



2. His persuasion of Agrippa lay mainly in his personal testimony to the power of grace in his own soul. Personal testimony ought always to weigh with men. Convince me that a man is honest, and then if he bears witness to facts which are matters of his own personal consciousness, not merely the gleanings of hearsay, I am bound to believe him; and especially if his testimony be backed up by others. A great part of the preaching of every Christian minister should lie in his bearing his personal testimony to what Christ has done for him.

3. He made a clear statement of the gospel (ver. 23). Where the gospel statement is clearly given, even if no reasoning is used, it will, under God, frequently convince, for it is so marvellously self-evidencing.

4. He did not close until he had made a home appeal to Agrippa. "King Agrippa," said he (in something like the style of Nathan when he said, "Thou art the man!"), "believest thou the prophets?" The minister must know how to take the scaling ladder, and fix it against the wall of the conscience, and climb it sword in hand, to meet the man face to face in sacred duel, for the capture of his heart.

### **III. THE DIFFERING DEGREES OF SUCCESS ATTENDING SUCH PERSUASIONS.**

How did Paul succeed.

1. Note that he failed with Festus, one of the most respectable of the Roman governors, the type of those common-sense people, who are very practical, very fond of facts, who consider nothing to be worth their thoughts that has anything like sentiment in it, or that deals with abstract truth. "Thou art beside thyself." Wherever the gospel is preached there are people who say, "Toleration — by all means; and if people like to believe this, or that, well let them believe it. We have more practical and rational business to attend to." If such men bring grief to the preacher nowadays, he must not marvel, for such was Paul's burden in his day.

2. Now let us turn to Agrippa, a man of very different mould. He had always taken an interest in religious questions. He was sprung of a family that, with all their frightful vices, had trembled before the voice of prophecy and Scripture, and like the Herod who heard John gladly, he listened with great attention and interest to Paul. As he weighed the arguments, he felt that there was a great deal to be said for Paul's view of the question. He did not half know but what Paul might be right. Still he had an "if." He would rather not think that the prisoner before him was better informed than he, or that such stem teaching demanded obedience from him, and, therefore, he closed the discourse with a remark intended to be pleasing to the orator, and he went his way. Oh, these Agrippas! I would almost sooner deal with Festus, for I know what Festus means, and one of these days it may be, the Lord will direct an arrow between the joints of Festus's harness; but Agrippa deceives me; he is a fair blossom that never knits, and so turns not to fruit; he is almost persuaded.

3. I wonder whether in Paul's congregation there was a third sort of hearer! Perhaps while Paul was failing with Festus and disappointed with Agrippa, there sat somewhere in the back seats a centurion, or a private soldier, or a Jewish ruler, upon whom the truth was falling like dew, and into whose heart it was being received as the ocean absorbs the falling shower.

### **IV. WHY THE HALF-CONVINCED HEARER WAS ONLY "ALMOST PERSUADED."**

It was not the fault of the preacher's matter or manner. Nothing could have been more powerful in either case. Where, then, did the fault lie?

1. On the right hand of Agrippa was a very excellent reason why he is not convinced, for there sat Bernice. The reason why sinners are not persuaded is, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, their love of sin! Bernice was beyond all doubt a shameless woman. Agrippa's public and ostentatious associating with her proved at least that he was in evil company. This is quite sufficient to account for his never being altogether persuaded to be a Christian. Evil company is one of Satan's great nets in which he holds his birds until the time shall come for their destruction.

2. Then there was the influence of Festus. If Festus calls Paul mad, Agrippa must not go the length of being persuaded. How could he go and dine with the governor if he became quite convinced? What would Festus say? "Ah! two madmen! Is Agrippa also beside himself?" Alas, how many are influenced by fear of men!

3. Do you not think, too, that Paul himself had something to do with it? Not that he was to blame in the case, but he wore decorations which were not of a pleasing character to a man of Agrippa's taste. Though better than golden ornaments were his chains, Paul seems to have perceived that Agrippa was shocked at Christianity in that peculiar garb, for he said, "Except these bonds." It often happens that looking abroad upon

the sorrows of God's people, ungodly men refuse to take their portion with them. They find that righteous men are frequently sneered at, and they cannot run the risk of such inconvenience. Oh that men were wise enough to see that suffering for Christ is honour, that the truest dignity rests in wearing the chain upon the arm rather than endure the chain upon the soul!

## **V. THE EVIL THAT WILL FOLLOW UPON BEING "ALMOST PERSUADED."**

1. He misses altogether the blessing which full persuasion would have brought him. A passenger was almost persuaded not to trust his life in a leaky ship, but he did so and perished. A merchant was almost persuaded not to have shares in a bubble speculation, but he bought the scrip, and his estate went down. A person exceedingly ill heard of a remedy, and he was almost persuaded to take it, but he did not, and therefore the disease grew worse and worse. You cannot have the blessing by being almost persuaded to have it. Your hunger cannot be appeased by almost eating, nor your thirst quenched by almost drinking.

2. He contracts additional guilt. A person has rebelled against the government, but he is afterwards very sorry for it, and he asks forgiveness; let mercy have free course. But another has been shown the impolicy of treason; he has seen the evil of taking up arms against the commonwealth, and he has been almost persuaded to be loyal. I say when he becomes a rebel, he is a traitor with a vengeance, to whom no mercy can be shown. The man who is almost persuaded to be honest, and yet deliberately becomes a thief, is a rogue ingrain.

3. To have been almost persuaded will lead to endless regrets.

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### **ALMOST A CHRISTIAN.** Acts 26:28 - James Smith

#### **1. What you Might Be, and Not Be a Christian.**

Born in a Christian country.  
Brought up in a Christian family (Judas).  
Educated in a Christian fashion.  
Connected with a Christian Church.  
Buried in a Christian manner.

#### **2. What is a Christian?**

One who has received Christ.  
One who belongs to Christ.  
One who is like Christ.  
One who serves Christ.

#### **3. What is it to be an Almost Christian?**

It is to see your need and not confess it.  
It is to wish to be saved and remain undecided.  
It is to be at the door, but still outside. (Handfuls of Purpose)

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### **The Danger of Indecision in Religion** - Acts 26:27-29 - Homiletic Review

- King Agrippa, believe you the prophets? I know that you believe....

I. IT IS OF NO AVAIL TO BE ONLY ALMOST PERSUADED. The almost persuaded sinner is still at an infinite remove from salvation.

II. THE GUILT AND DANGER OF THE SINNER ARE ENHANCED BY BEING ONLY ALMOST PERSUADED. Agrippa lost his one opportunity.

III. ETERNITY WILL BE GREATLY EMBITTERED BY SUCH AN EXPERIENCE AS AGRIPPA'S IN THIS LIFE. It immensely aggravates a loss to know that it might have been avoided.

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### **Acts 26:12-29 A Powerful Witness**

By Vernon C. Grounds

You almost persuade me to become a Christian. —Acts 26:28

British scientist Thomas Huxley (1825-1895) vigorously supported the theory of evolution, which earned him the nickname "Darwin's bulldog." As an agnostic, he believed religion was a harmful superstition.

One day Huxley asked a deeply committed Christian, "What does your faith mean to you?" Knowing Huxley's skepticism, the man paused and then replied, "You are very educated, and you can dispute anything I say."

Huxley urged him to explain why he was a Christian. So from his heart the man told what Jesus meant to him. Huxley, deeply moved, didn't argue. Wistfully he said, "I'd give my right hand for your faith in Jesus."

We can draw two lessons from this encounter. One is that while we may prize knowledge, we know that formal education is not necessary for the exercise of life-changing, saving faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). The second lesson is that a simple, straightforward testimony from the heart can often be more effective than a scholarly argument.

As the apostle Paul stood before King Agrippa, he told how Jesus had transformed his life, and Agrippa was deeply moved by what he heard (Acts 26:28).

Let's not hesitate to tell people what Jesus means to us personally. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Putting It Into Practice

- To whom can you speak about Christ today?
- Read How Can I Break The Silence?

When telling others what Christ can do for them,  
tell them what He has done for you.

**Acts 26:29 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."**

NET Acts 26:29 Paul replied, "I pray to God that whether in a short or a long time not only you but also all those who are listening to me today could become such as I am, except for these chains."

GNT Acts 26:29 ὁ Παῖς, Ἐξάμην ντ θε κα ν λ γ κα ν μεγ λ ο μ νον σ λλ κα π ντας το ς κο ντ ς μου σ μερον γεν σθαι τοιο του ς πο ο ς κα γ ε μι παρεκτ ς τ ν δεσμ ν των.

NLT Acts 26:29 Paul replied, "Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that both you and everyone here in this audience might become the same as I am, except for these chains."

KJV Acts 26:29 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.

ESV Acts 26:29 And Paul said, "Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am-- except for these chains."

CSB Acts 26:29 "I wish before God," replied Paul, "that whether easily or with difficulty, not only you but all who listen to me today might become as I am-- except for these chains."

NIV Acts 26:29 Paul replied, "Short time or long--I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."

NKJ Acts 26:29 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."

NRS Acts 26:29 Paul replied, "Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that not only you but also all who are listening to me today might become such as I am-- except for these chains."

YLT Acts 26:29 and Paul said, 'I would have wished to God, both in a little, and in much, not only thee, but also all those hearing me to-day, to become such as I also am -- except these bonds.'

NAB Acts 26:29 Paul replied, "I would pray to God that sooner or later not only you but all who listen to me today might become as I am except for these chains."

NJB Acts 26:29 Paul replied, 'Little or much, I wish before God that not only you but all who are listening to me today would come to be as I am -- except for these chains.'

GWN Acts 26:29 Paul replied, "I wish to God that you and everyone listening to me today would quickly and completely become as I am (except for being a prisoner)."

BBE Acts 26:29 And Paul said, It is my prayer to God that, in little or great measure, not only you, but all those hearing me today might be even as I am, but for these chains.

- **I would wish to God** Ex. 16:3. Nu. 11:29. 2 Sa. 18:33. 2 Ki. 5:3. 1 Co. 4:8; 7:7. 2 Co. 11:1.
- **that whether in a short or long time, not only you** Jer 13:17. Lu. 19:41, 42. Jn 5:34. Ro. 9:1–3; 10:1. Col. 1:28.
- **except for these chains** Acts 12:6; 25:14. Ep. 6:20.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## PAUL'S GRACIOUS RESPONSE TO KING AGRIPPA

**And Paul said, "I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time-** Paul refused to be discouraged and replied using the same word Agrippa had used for **short** (**oligos**). The KJV is not accurate here for the Greek text does not say "were both almost, and altogether" but **in a short or long time**. "Whether quickly or not" Although this is a decision best not put off, for one does not know how much time they have left in their life whether **a short or long time**. We all do well to heed the words of Paul who wrote "AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU." Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION" ( 2 Cor 6:2). Indeed, Paul has now put Agrippa (and all who heard his Gospel message) on trial! And the verdict was eternal death for all who reject Jesus' free gift of salvation by grace through faith.

**Robertson on in a short or long time** - Literally, "both in little and in great," or "both with little and with great pains" or "both in some measure and in great measure." Paul takes kindly the sarcasm of Agrippa.

**Wish** (2172)(**euchomai** related to **euche** = a vow in Acts 18:18, a prayer in Jas 5:15) literally meant to speak out or utter aloud and came to mean as used by to express a wish. The idea can be to desire something, with the implication of a pious wish. To vow (this sense is primarily found in the Septuagint uses but is found in Acts 26:29). To pray, but in the NT the derivative **proseuchomai** is the more common verb for pray. **Euchomai** and **proseuchomai** are more general terms for prayer, while **deomai** conveys the sense of seeking to have a need met.

**Not only you, but also all who hear me this day** - So while Paul focused on Agrippa, he knew the the need of every person in that auditorium was the Gospel.

**Longenecker** - Undoubtedly he spoke with evangelistic fervor, directing his appeal not only to the king but also to the other dignitaries. Then in a lighter vein, recognizing the apparent incongruity of appealing for their acceptance of spiritual freedom while he himself stood chained before them, he raised his hands and added, "except for these chains." (Ibid)

**Kenneth Gangel** wrote, "I want to weep when I picture the scene in my mind. Beaten and persecuted by the Jews, ridiculed by the Greeks and Romans, Paul still wanted them to accept Jesus. Paul still wanted to share the Gospel with them. He did not even want them to be prisoners in chains... Even at this high point of rhetorical fervor, Paul's caring heart breaks through in his words. He probably would have proclaimed more words, but the king had had enough and terminated the event by rising to leave. He neither considered Paul guilty of crime nor intended to become a Christian, so why should he listen any longer?"

**Might become such as I am** - A Christian like me, a Jewish man who believes that Jesus Christ is the Messiah Who died on the Cross, was resurrected from the dead, ascended to the right hand of the Father and Who is returning to establish His Messianic Kingdom that Jews have been looking for and hoping for for millennia.

**Except for these chains** - The obvious irony is that all who reject Jesus' offer of deliverance are tightly bound by their sin and so are not spiritually free. The man bound with literal chains was the only one who was actually free, for He knew the Son Who said

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." ([eleutheroo](#)) 33 They

answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet been enslaved ([douleuo](#)) to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You will become free ([eleutheros](#)) ’?” 34 Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave ([doulos](#)) of sin. 35 “The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. 36 “So if the Son makes you free ([eleutheroo](#)), you will be free ([eleutheros](#)) indeed. (Jn 8:31-36)

**NET Note on Except for these chains.** The chains represented Paul’s unjust suffering for the sake of the message. His point was, in effect, “I do not care how long it takes. I only hope you and everyone else hearing this would become believers in Christ, but without my unjust suffering.”

**MacArthur** - No matter how long it took, it was Paul’s heartfelt desire that all who heard him would come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. The scene is again one of startling incongruity. A lowly prisoner in chains tells the gathered political and military leaders and other important figures that he wishes they could be like him. Their fading, fleeting treasure was here on earth; Paul had “an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys” (Luke 12:33+).

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### Vance Havner - STOCKS AND BONDS

He went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Matthew 19:22.

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. Acts 26:29.

The rich young Ruler’s wealth kept him out of the Kingdom and many a man gains the world and loses his soul. Stocks and bonds can make it difficult to lay up treasure in heaven. Paul’s stocks and bonds were of another sort, stocks for his feet and bonds for his wrists, but he could wish that kings had his heavenly treasure. The Scriptures do not teach the denial of money or its deification but its dedication. If we can be poor in spirit and rich at the bank well and good, but it is a rare combination. One may wear earthly chains and be a spiritual millionaire. Far better that than a capitalist in chains!

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### Acts 26:29 The Obedience Secret - [Samuel Logan Brengle](#)

INTRODUCTION: This reveals the secret of Paul’s success as a soul-winner. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. Those who win others are soldiers who obey orders (Jer. 1:4–7).

1. This Obedience Must Be Prompt. The King’s business requires haste (1 Sam. 21:8). If I speak when the Spirit moves me, I can usually introduce the gospel with good results, but if I delay, the opportunity slips by.
2. This Obedience Must Be Exact. Saul lost his kingdom because his obedience was only partial (1 Sam. 15).
3. This Obedience Must Be Courageous. God told Jeremiah and Ezekiel to be unafraid of reactions to their message (Jer. 1:8; Ezek. 2:6). Saul lost his crown because he feared the people more than he feared God (1 Sam. 15:24).
4. This Obedience Must Be Glad. (See Ps. 100:2.)

**CONCLUSION:** The soul-winner is a servant of God, a friend of Jesus, a prophet of the Most High, an ambassador of Heaven to the sons of men. We must speak Heaven’s words and represent Heaven’s court, seeking not our own will but His.

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### The Difference Jesus Makes - Read: Acts 26:1-18, 27-32

I would to God that . . . all who hear me today, might become . . . as I am. —Acts 26:29

Throughout history, people have treated others with unbelievable cruelty in the name of religion. They have often done so without feelings of remorse or guilt. Muslims and Christians have fought “holy wars” against one another, which have been anything but holy. And within their own ranks, so-called Christians have persecuted other Christians. Like Saul of Tarsus before he became Christ’s apostle to the Gentiles, they think they are doing God a service when actually they are persecuting Jesus (Acts 9:4).

When I first learned about the atrocities committed in the name of religion, my boyhood confidence in the Christian faith was shaken. I didn’t dare tell my parents about my misgivings, so I talked to the Lord about it. He led me to notice what happened in Paul’s life.

As a powerful member of the Pharisees, Saul (the Hebrew name of Paul) thought he was pleasing God by persecuting Christians. Then he met Jesus (Acts 9:1-19). From then on, he peacefully sought to bring even his enemies to Christ.

It’s not Christ’s way to force His will on us. Neither should we force our will on others. As we put God’s ways into practice, we’ll find we can love those with whom we disagree. That’s the difference Jesus makes! ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

## Thinking It Through

How did Jesus react to Peter's attempt to defend Him with a sword? (Jn. 18:10-11). What did Jesus say should be our attitude toward our enemies? (Mt. 5:43-48).

No force is greater than the power of God's love.

By Herbert VanderLugt

### Acts 26:30 The king stood up and the governor and Bernice, and those who were sitting with them,

NET Acts 26:30 So the king got up, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them,

GNT Acts 26:30 ν στη τε βασιλε ς κα γεμ ν τε Βερν κη κα ο συγκαθ μενοι α το ς,

NLT Acts 26:30 Then the king, the governor, Bernice, and all the others stood and left.

KJV Acts 26:30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:

ESV Acts 26:30 Then the king rose, and the governor and Bernice and those who were sitting with them.

CSB Acts 26:30 So the king, the governor, Bernice, and those sitting with them got up,

NIV Acts 26:30 The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them.

NKJ Acts 26:30 When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them;

NRS Acts 26:30 Then the king got up, and with him the governor and Bernice and those who had been seated with them;

YLT Acts 26:30 And, he having spoken these things, the king rose up, and the governor, Bernice also, and those sitting with them,

NAB Acts 26:30 Then the king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and the others who sat with them.

NJB Acts 26:30 At this the king rose to his feet, with the governor and Bernice and those who sat there with them.

GWN Acts 26:30 The king, the governor, Bernice, and the people who were sitting with them got up.

BBE Acts 26:30 And the king and the ruler and Bernice and those who were seated with them got up;

- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## PAUL'S DEFENSE FINIS!

**The king stood up and the governor and Bernice, and those who were sitting with them** - While Paul had just had the "last word," now the King in essence signals the "last word" by standing to his feet. The King realizes Paul had put him on trial and the courtroom was a heavenly one and he had heard enough! The hearing was over or as they say "[finis](#)."

**Robertson** quips "The entertainment was over."

**The king**, et al as noted above did not realize it but they were actually the ones on trial! If you are reading Acts 26 and are not yet persuaded that Jesus is the Messiah Who was crucified, died, was buried and rose from the dead, then your soul is also on trial. Don't make the mistake that it appears these "rich and famous" people made. Humble yourself and receive Paul's words which are able to save your soul!

**Wiersbe** adds - Festus and Agrippa knew that their prisoner had a compassionate concern for them, and they could not easily escape his challenge. The best thing to do was to end the hearing, so the king stood up; and this told everybody that the audience was over.....What Agrippa and Festus did not understand was that Paul had been the judge and they had been the prisoners on trial. They had been shown the light and the way to freedom, but they had deliberately closed their eyes and returned to their sins.



Perhaps they felt relieved that Paul would go to Rome and trouble them no more. The trial was over, but their sentence was still to come; and come it would. What a wonderful thing is the opportunity to trust Jesus Christ and be saved! What a terrible thing is wasting that opportunity and perhaps never having another. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Acts 26:31 and when they had gone aside, they began talking to one another, saying, "This man is not doing anything worthy of death or imprisonment."**

NET Acts 26:31 and as they were leaving they said to one another, "This man is not doing anything deserving death or imprisonment."

GNT Acts 26:31 καὶ νᾶχωρ σάντες ἄλλουν πρὸς ἄλλλους ἄγοντες τι ὁ δὲ νῆαν του δεσμὸν ἐξεν [τι] πρὸς σε ἄνθρωπος ὁ τοῦ.

NLT Acts 26:31 As they went out, they talked it over and agreed, "This man hasn't done anything to deserve death or imprisonment."

KJV Acts 26:31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

ESV Acts 26:31 And when they had withdrawn, they said to one another, "This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment."

CSB Acts 26:31 and when they had left they talked with each other and said, "This man is doing nothing that deserves death or chains."

NIV Acts 26:31 They left the room, and while talking with one another, they said, "This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment."

NKJ Acts 26:31 and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains."

NRS Acts 26:31 and as they were leaving, they said to one another, "This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment."

YLT Acts 26:31 and having withdrawn, they were speaking unto one another, saying -- 'This man doth nothing worthy of death or of bonds;'

NAB Acts 26:31 And after they had withdrawn they said to one another, "This man is doing nothing (at all) that deserves death or imprisonment."

NJB Acts 26:31 When they had retired they talked together and agreed, 'This man is doing nothing that deserves death or imprisonment.'

GWN Acts 26:31 As they were leaving, they said to each other, "This man isn't doing anything for which he deserves to die or be put in prison."

BBE Acts 26:31 And when they had gone away they said to one another, This man has done nothing which might give cause for death or prison.

- **This man.** Acts 23:9, 29; 25:25; 28:18. 2 Sa. 24:17. Lu. 23:4, 14, 15. 1 Pe. 3:16; 4:14–16.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**And when they had gone aside, they began talking to one another, saying** - "Imperfect active, describing the eager conversation of the dignitaries about Paul's wonderful speech." (Robertson)

**Gilbrant** - It is probable too they were all feeling uncomfortable because of the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Though Paul addressed Agrippa directly, Festus was affected, and probably the others also. Paul's testimony had the ring of truth to it. They could not deny that the appearance of Christ in His resurrection glory had made a tremendous change in the apostle Paul. They did not try to deny either that the Old Testament Scriptures prophesied the death and resurrection of Jesus and upheld the truth of the gospel. These truths were in their minds, but they did not discuss them. (Ibid)

**This man is not doing anything worthy of death or imprisonment** - Repeatedly Paul has been judged as innocent of any crime

and sadly not any of them had been won to Christ.

(Acts 23:9) And there occurred a great uproar; and some of the scribes of the Pharisaic party stood up and began to argue heatedly, saying, "We find nothing wrong with this man; suppose a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?"

(Acts 23:29) and I found him to be accused over questions about their Law, but under no accusation deserving death or imprisonment.

(Acts 25:25) "But I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death; and since he himself appealed to the Emperor, I decided to send him.

**NET Note on Not doing anything deserving death** - Here is yet another declaration of Paul's innocence, but still no release. The portrayal shows how unjust Paul's confinement was.

**Deserving** (514) see note above on [áxios](#)

**Acts 26:32 And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."**

NET Acts 26:32 Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar."

GNT Acts 26:32 γρ ππας ὁ τ Φ στ φη, πολελ σθαι ὁ νατο νθρωπος ο τος ε μ πεκ κλητο Κα σαρα.

NLT Acts 26:32 And Agrippa said to Festus, "He could have been set free if he hadn't appealed to Caesar."

KJV Acts 26:32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.

ESV Acts 26:32 And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

CSB Acts 26:32 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar."

NIV Acts 26:32 Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

NKJ Acts 26:32 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

NRS Acts 26:32 Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to the emperor."

YLT Acts 26:32 and Agrippa said to Festus, 'This man might have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar.'

NAB Acts 26:32 And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

NJB Acts 26:32 And Agrippa remarked to Festus, 'The man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.'

GWN Acts 26:32 Agrippa told Festus, "This man could have been set free if he hadn't appealed his case to the emperor."

- **appealed.** Acts 25:11, 12, 25; 28:18.
- [Paul Before Agrippa - Video](#) - 7 minutes
- [Acts 26 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."**- That might be true, but Festus should have already freed him even before his appeal to Caesar and the angry bloodthirsty Jews were just waiting for the Romans to set him free so they could kill him. And recall that Paul was forced to appeal because Festus was seeking to shift the trial to Jerusalem. His appeal is described in Acts 25:11, 12, 25. The question arises then, did Festus have something to write to the Emperor concerning why he is sending Paul? Agrippa does not seem to give him anything to write with a comment such as this!

**Longenecker** observes that "Agrippa's comment should not be taken to mean that a provincial governor could not free a prisoner after an appeal to Caesar. In this situation, however, Paul's status was not a question of law only but also of politics (cf. Acts 25:12+). Luke has picked up these words of Agrippa and uses them to conclude his accounts of Paul's defenses before Roman as well as Jewish judges. In fact, they conclude Luke's apologetic motif in Acts and vindicate both Paul and Christianity from any suspicion of sedition." (Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 9: John and Acts)

**NET Note** - Ultimately Agrippa and Festus blamed what Paul himself had done in appealing to Caesar for his own continued custody. In terms of Luke's narrative, this still appears unjust and a denial of responsibility.

**John MacArthur** concludes this section -

The question arises as to why Paul could not be released, since both Festus and Agrippa had found him innocent of wrongdoing. Noted expert on Roman law **A. N. Sherwin-White** explains:

When Agrippa remarked: "this man could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar," this does not mean that in strict law the governor could not pronounce an acquittal after the act of appeal. It is not a question of law, but of the relations between the emperor and his subordinates, and of that element of non-constitutional power which the Romans called *auctoritas*, "prestige," on which the supremacy of the *Princeps* so largely depended. No sensible man with hopes of promotion would dream of short-circuiting the appeal to Caesar unless he had specific authority to do so. ( Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963], 65)

**NET Note on Agrippa** - King Agrippa was Herod Agrippa II (A.D. 27–92/93), son of Herod Agrippa I (see Acts 12:1). He ruled over parts of Palestine from A.D. 53 until his death. His sister Bernice was widowed when her second husband, Herod King of Chalcis, died in A.D. 48. From then she lived with her brother. In an attempt to quiet rumors of an incestuous relationship between them, she resolved to marry Polemo of Cilicia, but she soon left him and returned to Herod Agrippa II. Their incestuous relationship became the gossip of Rome according to Josephus (Ant. 20.7.3 [20.145–147]). The visit of Agrippa and Bernice gave Festus the opportunity to get some internal Jewish advice. Herod Agrippa II was a trusted adviser because he was known to be very loyal to Rome (Josephus, J. W. 2.16.4 [2.345–401]).

**NET Note on Festus** - Porcius Festus was the procurator of Palestine who succeeded Felix; neither the beginning nor the end of his rule (at his death) can be determined with certainty, although he appears to have died in office after about two years. Nero recalled Felix in A.D. 57 or 58, and Festus was appointed to his vacant office in A.D. 57, 58, or 59. According to Josephus (Ant. 20.8.9–10 [20.182–188]; J. W. 2.14.1 [2.271–272]), his administration was better than that of his predecessor Felix or his successor Albinus, but Luke in Acts portrays him in a less favorable light: He was willing to sacrifice Paul to court Jewish favor by taking him to Jerusalem for trial (v. 9), regardless of Paul's guilt or innocence. The one characteristic for which Festus was noted is that he dealt harshly with those who disturbed the peace.

**Set free** (released) ([630](#))/([apoluo](#) from **apó** = marker of dissociation, implying a rupture from a former association, separation + **luo** = loose) is used often of sending a person or a group away from someone (Mt 14:15, 22, 23, 32, etc). **Apoluo** in this passage has the sense of to let loose from or to release from arrest or custody) (cf Acts 17:9) and thus to let go free or set at liberty.