

“Can You Be Convinced?”

Acts 25:13–26:32

May 31, 2026

Acts 25:13-27

13 Several days later, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived in Caesarea and paid a courtesy call on Festus. **14** Since they were staying there several days, Festus presented Paul’s case to the king, saying, “There’s a man who was left as a prisoner by Felix. **15** When I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews presented their case and asked that he be condemned. **16** I answered them that it is not the Roman custom to give someone up before the accused faces the accusers and has an opportunity for a defense against the charges. **17** So when they had assembled here, I did not delay. The next day I took my seat at the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought in. **18** The accusers stood up but brought no charge against him of the evils I was expecting. **19** Instead they had some disagreements with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, a dead man Paul claimed to be alive. **20** Since I was at a loss in a dispute over such things, I asked him if he wanted to go to Jerusalem and be tried there regarding these matters. **21** But when Paul appealed to be held for trial by the Emperor, I ordered him to be kept in custody until I could send him to Caesar.” **22** Agrippa said to Festus, “I would like to hear the man myself.” “Tomorrow, you will hear him,” he replied.

23 So the next day, Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the auditorium with the military commanders and prominent men of the city. When Festus gave the command, Paul was brought in. **24** Then Festus said, “King Agrippa and all men present with us, you see this man. The whole Jewish community has appealed to me concerning him, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he should not live any longer. **25** I found that he had not done anything deserving of death, but when he himself appealed to the Emperor, I decided to send him. **26** I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore, I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after this examination is over, I may have something to write. **27** For it seems unreasonable to me to send a prisoner without indicating the charges against him.”

Paul had been imprisoned here for two years where he wrote Colossians and Philemon, and he also possibly wrote Ephesians and Phillipians at this time.

There is a contrast between the men in this passage who are more concerned about themselves and Paul who is like an innocent man accused of a crime he did not commit.

Acts 26:1-23

1 Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and began his defense: **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, **3** especially since you are very knowledgeable about all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

4 “All the Jews know my way of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem. **5** They have known me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived as a Pharisee. **6** And now I stand on trial because of the hope in what God promised to our ancestors, **7** the promise our twelve tribes hope to reach as they earnestly serve him night and day. King Agrippa, I am being accused by the Jews because of this hope. **8** Why do any of you consider it incredible

that God raises the dead? **9** In fact, I myself was convinced that it was necessary to do many things in opposition to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. **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 was in agreement against them. **11** In all the synagogues I often punished them and tried to make them blaspheme. Since I was terribly enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.

12 “I was traveling to Damascus under these circumstances with authority and a commission from the chief priests. **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. **14** We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice speaking to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ **15** “I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ “And the Lord replied, ‘I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. **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 will see of me. **17** I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them **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 share among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

19 “So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. **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. **21** For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and were trying to kill me. **22** To this very day, I have had help from God, and I stand and testify to both small and great, saying nothing other than what the prophets and Moses said would take place — **23** that the Messiah would suffer, and that, as the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light to our people and to the Gentiles.”

Paul stretched out his hand brings to mind Moses at the Red Sea. The Sea is their salvation (Exodus 14.21-22) or their judgment (Exodus 14.26-28), and so Christ is either your salvation or your judgment.

Genesis 1:3 – Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

Colossians 1:12-14 – Giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the saints’ inheritance in the light. He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. In him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Acts 26:24-32

24 As he was saying these things in his defense, Festus exclaimed in a loud voice, “You’re out of your mind, Paul! Too much study is driving you mad.” **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. **26** For the king knows about these matters, and I can speak boldly to him. For I am convinced that none of these things has escaped his notice, since this was not done in a corner. **27** King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you believe.” **28** Agrippa said to Paul, “Are you going to persuade me to become a Christian so easily?” **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.” **30** The king, the governor, Bernice, and those sitting with them got up, **31** and when they had left they talked with each other and said,

“This man is not doing anything to deserve death or imprisonment.” **32** Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

Festus’ response—*You are mad, too much study.*

2 Corinthians 5:13 – For if we are out of our mind, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.

"For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries." [Robert Jastrow]

Agrippa’s response—*You are not a fool! What say you?*

Paul: *I wish before God that you would all believe.* Can you be convinced?

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. What did God say to you through His Scripture during our Sunday gathering?
2. Are you convinced to believe in Christ? What convinced you to believe?
3. How has the testimony of another brought you closer to Christ? Why is personal testimony such a powerful tool for sharing the gospel?
4. What stands out about Paul’s willingness to repeatedly share his testimony? What feels unique about it this time?
5. Why can it sometimes become easy to lose excitement about sharing what Jesus has done in our lives? How can we combat this and keep the gospel fresh in our hearts?
6. Is belief in Christ really the most reasonable belief?
7. How can we prepare ourselves to give a defense for the hope we have in Christ? What does it look like to speak truth with both conviction and gentleness?
8. What does it mean to be in the kingdom of light?
9. How can your Life Group help you apply this passage to your life this week? How can they pray for you this week?