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By Dan Maines

Acts 26

Acts 26:1-3

Now Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." Then Paul extended his hand and proceeded to make his defense: "Regarding all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate that it is before you that I am to make my defense today; especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among the Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently."

† Paul began with respect, acknowledging Agrippa's familiarity with Jewish customs. He sought to build common ground before presenting the truth.

Acts 26:4-5

"So then, all Jews know my way of life from my youth, which from the beginning was spent among my own nation and in Jerusalem; 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."

† Paul reminded them of his Pharisaic background, proving his devotion to the Law.

† Josephus (Antiquities 18.1.3) confirms the Pharisees' strict observance of the Law.

Acts 26:6-7

"And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers, the promise to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve God night and day. For this hope, King Agrippa, I am being accused by Jews."

† Paul framed his trial as faithfulness to Israel's promises, not rebellion. The true issue was the hope of resurrection.

Acts 26:8

"Why is it considered incredible among you people if God raises the dead?"

† The central question was the resurrection. Denial of resurrection was unbelief in God's power.

Acts 26:9-11

"So I thought to myself that I had to act in strong opposition to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, after receiving authority from the chief priests, but I also cast my

vote against them when they were being put to death. And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was extremely enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities."

† Paul confessed his violent persecution of the church, highlighting the radical transformation of his life.

† Early church fathers like Chrysostom noted Paul's testimony as evidence of God's grace to the worst of sinners.

Acts 26:12-15

"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 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.' And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.'"

† Paul's encounter with Christ was undeniable and supernatural. The phrase "kick against the goads" was a Greek proverb meaning futile resistance against divine will.

Acts 26:16-18

"But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you as a servant and a witness, not only to the things in which you have seen Me, 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 power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."

† Paul's mission was divinely appointed: to open eyes, turn people from darkness, and proclaim forgiveness and inheritance in Christ.

Acts 26:19-20

"For that reason, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but continually proclaimed to those in Damascus first, and in Jerusalem, and then all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they are to repent and turn to God, performing deeds consistent with repentance."

† Paul emphasized obedience to the heavenly vision. His message was consistent everywhere: repentance and faith proven by transformed lives.

Acts 26:21-23

"For these reasons some Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. 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, as to whether the Christ was to suffer, and whether, as first from the resurrection of the dead, He would proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."

† Paul tied his message directly to Moses and the Prophets. Christ's suffering, resurrection, and light to the nations fulfilled the Scriptures.

† Isaiah 49:6 predicted the Servant bringing light to the Gentiles, fulfilled in Christ.

Acts 26:24-25

While Paul was stating these things in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you insane." But Paul said, "I am not insane, most excellent Festus; on the contrary, I am speaking out with truthful and rational words."

† Festus dismissed Paul's claims as madness, but Paul affirmed the rationality of the gospel.

† Tertullian (Apology 46) later argued similarly, that Christian faith is both reasonable and divine.

Acts 26:26-27

"For the king knows about these matters, and I also speak to him with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you believe."

† Paul appealed directly to Agrippa's knowledge of Jewish prophecy. The gospel was public truth, not hidden speculation.

Acts 26:28-29

Agrippa replied to Paul, "In a short time you are going to persuade me to make a Christian of myself." And Paul said, "I would wish to God that even in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, would become such as I am, except for these chains."

† Paul's desire was for all to share his faith, though not his chains. His boldness before kings revealed his unwavering mission.

Acts 26:30-32

The king stood up and the governor, and Bernice, and those who were sitting with them, and when they had gone out, they began talking to one another, saying, "This man is not doing anything deserving death or imprisonment." And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

† Agrippa acknowledged Paul's innocence. His appeal to Caesar, however, ensured his journey to Rome, fulfilling God's

plan.

How it applies to us today

† Testimony remains one of the most powerful witnesses for Christ.

† The gospel fulfills the Law and the Prophets, proving God's promises in Christ.

† Faith is both reasonable and divine, able to withstand accusations of madness.

† Believers should desire all people, even rulers and persecutors, to know the freedom found in Christ.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

Source Index

† Josephus, Antiquities 18.1.3 – Pharisees' strict observance of the Law

† Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts – Paul's transformation as grace to sinners

† Isaiah 49:6 – Servant bringing light to Gentiles

† Tertullian, Apology 46 – Christianity is reasonable and divine

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