

**Acts 26 NIV** study guide

**1** Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: **2** "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, **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. **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. **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. **6** And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today. **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. **8** Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead? **9** "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. **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. **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.

**12** "On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. **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. **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.' **15** "Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' "'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. **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. **17** I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them **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.' **19** "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. **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. **21** That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. **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-- **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."

**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." **25** "I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable. **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. **27** King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do." **28** Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" **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." **30** The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them. **31** They left the room, and while talking with one another, they said, "This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment." **32** Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

This is a beautiful chapter. Paul is allowed to speak freely in his own defense. Read it over a couple of times to get the sequence of events clear. Ask God to speak to you through His word.

# *Within the Word*

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Last week I ask you if you thought Paul viewed this as an opportunity given by God to share the gospel with these officials that he certainly would not have had any other way. What was your answer? Today we will see what was on Paul's heart as he stood before King Agrippa and the governor Festus.

1. Read vss.1-3 how does Paul describe his feelings that day?
2. What is it that makes Paul happy? What has he dedicated himself to over the last several years of his life?
3. In verses 4-11 Paul gives his life story before he met Jesus. List what you learn about him from these verses.
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4. List the facts in verses 12-18 about Paul's conversion to Christ.
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5. List the facts in verses 19-20 what Paul did after his conversion.
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6. What is the reason given by Paul in verses 19-23 for his imprisonment?
7. What does Festus say is Paul's problem?
8. Isn't it funny how those who do not understand the gospel assume we are crazy?
9. Have you ever had someone tell you that you were crazy?
  - Perhaps a lost husband that does not understand why you sacrifice the way you do.
  - Or maybe a co-worker that sees you overlooked for a promotion simply because they know your beliefs in certain areas.
  - One day it may be that believers will face prison and death as the Apostle Paul is doing here for their stand for Christ. We must learn from those who have gone before us that even in this situation we can be more than conquerors through Christ. Romans 8:37-39  
*"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything*

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*else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

10. Paul quickly turns the attention back to Agrippa and his knowledge of the things Paul is saying. What is the question he poses to Agrippa? Vs.27
11. What is Agrippa's response to Paul? You might want to read his response in several other translations. NKJV, ESV, NAS
12. What was Paul's response to Agrippa and all those listening that day?
13. What was he saying to them and to us as we read these words?
  - Don't miss this question; spend some time thinking about it.
  - What is the Lord speaking to you today as you read this?
  - Are you saved? Can you recall the time when you repented of your sins and ask Christ to come into your life?
  - If so, then what is the call of God on your life? If your answer is I really don't know then go back and read Acts 1:8.
  - Have you dedicated yourself to sharing the gospel with others like the apostle Paul or are you simply holding on to this precious gift that God has given you? God is not calling you to do anything that he will not equip you to handle, but you must begin. Just do the next right thing. Live worthy of your calling in Christ Jesus. Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:11-12
14. What are your thoughts as you read verses 30-32? Do you wish Paul had not even mentioned Caesar?
15. God is sovereign, He has a plan and a purpose and all things work according to that plan. Do you remember what Paul had said in Acts 19:21? Rome was his focus from that point on. He desired to go to Jerusalem but then he fully intended to go to Rome. The fact that he would go as a prisoner and not a free man was not an issue to Paul. There may be times when you are willing to do God's will but as it unfolds it is not the way you had it pictured. Does that cause you to stop or do you respond as Paul with an eternal focus?
16. How do you view the circumstances of your life? Try to remember God is sovereign.
17. How has this study of chapter 26 helped you in your walk with Christ?