

**1190 Paul's defense before Agrippa and beginning his journey to Rome - Acts(26)1–(27)26
(by Whirlwind)**

First, we discuss the beginning of Paul's defense before Agrippa. Second, we mention Paul's calling in the blinding great light, citing a previous article. Third, we note that Festus thought Paul was mad, but Paul instead urged Festus to believe in the Lord. Fourth, in accordance with Festus's order, Paul was taken by ship to Rome under the command of Centurion Julius. Fifth, we discussed how Paul urged the crew not to continue sailing from Cos. Sixth, we covered how the crew disregarded Paul's advice, set sail, and encountered danger. Finally, we noted God's promise that only the ship would be damaged, while they themselves would be saved.

Please note that this article is an expansion of the topicwise Bible study held on Sunday (5/17/26). Unless otherwise specified, verses refer to those in NASB95. If this article refers previous articles, they can all be found on our website, '<https://a-christian-voice.com/>'; click on 'Understanding Spiritual Life'.

1. The beginning of Paul's defense before Agrippa

"Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and proceeded to make his defense: "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; especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among the Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently. "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; 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. 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. And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews. Why is it considered incredible among you people if God does raise the dead? "So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile 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, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. 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."(Acts 26:1-11)

Paul stated a fact before Agrippa; he was not flattering him. He also asked him to listen patiently, knowing that what he was about to say would be lengthy. He first described his own situation, rephrasing it to say, "and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions."(Galatians 1:14) He had indeed advanced to the point of persecuting the disciples.

He then continued, "And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers."(Acts 26:6) The Scriptures speak very clearly of this hope; please look at the passage for yourself. Then he acknowledged a fact: "For 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) It even went so far that "...when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them."(Acts 26:10) No wonder he said, "...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all."(1 Timothy 1:15) Let us look at an example of Paul's persecution of believers all the way to the Gentile cities and its consequences.

2. Paul's calling in the blinding great light

"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.' And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 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.' "So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, 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. For this reason some Jews seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death. 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."”(Acts 26:12-23)

This passage clearly describes the scene of Paul's calling; the blinding light was not the light of the sun, and it also speaks of his mission. Since there are three records of Paul's calling in the blinding light, we previously discussed the connection between these three in "1177 Saul saw great light, Ananias, and Peter raised Tabitha – Acts(9)1-43" under "1. The three accounts of Christ appearing to Saul," we previously discussed the connection between these three records. This is to ensure consistency with all the narratives; since they are based on a single fact, they allow us to reconstruct the scene as it occurred. Please refer to that article. He said, "So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision."(Acts 26:19) He acted in accordance with this calling: "For this reason some Jews seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death."(Acts 26:21) And in accordance with God's promise, he has stood firm to this very day. What he said is clearly explained in the Scriptures; please take a look at the text.

3. Paul urges Festus to believe in the Lord

"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." But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth. 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. King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do." Agrippa replied to Paul, "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian." 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." The king stood up and the governor and Bernice, and those who were sitting with them, and when they had gone aside, they began talking to one another, saying, "This man is not doing anything worthy of death or imprisonment." And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.""(Acts 26:24-32)

Festus thought Paul was out of his mind, but Paul actually tried to persuade Festus to believe in the Lord. Although he ultimately failed, Paul did indeed preach the gospel before them. Therefore, it is by no means the case that whatever a spiritual person hopes for or prays for will come to pass; if the listener does not have an ear to hear, the message will not get through. In fact, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."(1 Timothy 2:3-4) You see, God merely desires this; He does not make decisions for people, for He has given them free will, which He will not take back. Next comes the matter of his innocence, which we have shared about before. Although he was innocent, he was still compelled to appeal to Caesar (cf. Acts 25:6-12) and was sent to Rome.

4. Paul was taken by ship to Rome under the guard of the centurion Julius

"When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, they proceeded to deliver Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan cohort named Julius. And embarking in an Adramyttian ship, which was about to sail to the regions along the coast of Asia, we put out to sea accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica. The next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul with consideration and allowed him to go to his friends and receive care. From there we put out to sea and sailed under the shelter of Cyprus because the winds were contrary. When we had sailed through the sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and he put us aboard it. When we had sailed slowly for a good many days, and with difficulty had arrived off Cnidus, since the wind did not permit us to go farther, we sailed under the shelter of Crete, off Salmone; and with difficulty sailing past it we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea."(Acts 27:1-8)

We see that Luke's account is quite detailed, much like a historical record, noting that "...Julius treated Paul with consideration and allowed him to go to his friends and receive care."(Acts 27:3) After arriving at Lydda, they boarded another ship bound for Italy. "...since the wind did not permit us to go farther, we sailed under the shelter of Crete, off Salmone."(Acts 27:7) until we reached Fair Havens.

5. Paul advises against continuing the voyage at Fair Havens

"When considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the fast was already over, Paul began to admonish them, and said to them, "Men, I perceive that the

voyage will certainly be with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.” But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the captain of the ship than by what was being said by Paul. Because the harbor was not suitable for wintering, the majority reached a decision to put out to sea from there, if somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there.

When a moderate south wind came up, supposing that they had attained their purpose, they weighed anchor and began sailing along Crete, close inshore.”(Acts 27:9-13)

We see Paul’s perspective, thinking their life was in danger; though we will later learn that this differed from God’s plan, it was close enough. Here we also see that God does not do everything that spiritual people say He will do, but there may be at least one exception. The Scripture says, “Thus Samuel grew and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fail.”(1 Samuel 3:19) It does not say here that Samuel had to receive God’s promise first before speaking, or that God would do what Samuel said, or both. Even so, with the Ark of the Covenant present, it still took a very long time before all Israel turned to the Lord, as the Scripture says, “From the day that the ark remained at Kiriath-jearim, the time was long, for it was twenty years; and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.”(1 Samuel 7:2) But the people did not listen to Paul, and furthermore, “When a moderate south wind came up, supposing that they had attained their purpose, they weighed anchor and began sailing along Crete, close inshore.”(Acts 27:13)

6. The people disregarded Paul’s advice, set sail, and faced peril

“But before very long there rushed down from the land a violent wind, called Euraquilo; and when the ship was caught in it and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and let ourselves be driven along. Running under the shelter of a small island called Clauda, we were scarcely able to get the ship’s boat under control. After they had hoisted it up, they used supporting cables in undergirding the ship; and fearing that they might run aground on the shallows of Syrtis, they let down the sea anchor and in this way let themselves be driven along. The next day as we were being violently storm-tossed, they began to jettison the cargo; and on the third day they threw the ship’s tackle overboard with their own hands. Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.”(Acts 27:14-20)

We saw that the ship could not withstand the wind called “Euraquilo,” so they tied up the small boat that had been hauled aboard by undergirding it with ropes; in the end, they could only lower the sail of the ship and let it drift. Seeing the fierce winds and waves pressing in, they despaired and concluded that salvation was impossible.

7. God promises everyone that only the ship will be lost, but they will be saved

“When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, “Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss. Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.’ Therefore, keep

up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told. But we must run aground on a certain island.””(Acts 27:21-26)

We see how anxious the people were, so much so that they had eaten almost nothing for many days. Yet "Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His godly ones."(Psalm 116:15). Paul was clearly one of God’s saints, and when He called him, God had promised, "rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you."(Acts 26:17) We can also see Paul’s faith; he believed God’s prophecy and told the people exactly that.