



## *ACTS - Living in the Promises of Jesus*

### Acts 26

### Lesson 21

Acts 26 reveals Paul's fifth and final trial before he began his journey to Rome. In this chapter we will not only study his final testimony of defense, but will, for the third time read the details of his conversion. The trial ended with King Agrippa and those with him determining Paul's innocence. Yet, he was not released. It also ended with King Agrippa *almost* making a determination about his own spiritual guilt. Thus, neither Paul nor Agrippa was set free from the chains that bound them.

#### **OBSERVATION: Read Acts 26**

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns that refer to *God, Jesus, Paul, King Agrippa, and Festus*.  
  
Key Words: *God, Jesus, Paul, King Agrippa, Festus, turn/repentance, and believe*
3. The contrasting word *but* is used five times in Acts 26. Mark each time the word is used. Choose one of those times and record what is being contrasted.
4. The term of conclusion, *therefore*, was used three times in Acts 26. Mark each time the word is used. Choose one of those times; record the conclusion and what it was based upon.

## PAUL'S LIFE BEFORE HE MET JESUS: Read Acts 26:1-11

1. King Agrippa *permitted* Paul to speak for himself. What was Paul's response? verse 2
  - a. Why do you think Paul would have been *happy* to *answer for* himself?
    - 1.) In what ways might you benefit from applying Paul's attitude?
  - b. Record Paul's words from 1 Corinthians 9:16. What is it like to have something burning in you that you can't ignore?
2. According to Acts 26:3, what did Paul know about King Agrippa?
  - a. What might be the benefit of knowing Jewish *customs*?
3. Read verses 4-11 and briefly describe Paul's life before meeting Jesus.
4. Paul mentioned *the hope of the promise made to his fathers* in verses 6,7. Using verse 8, what is the *promise* Paul spoke of?
  - a. In the midst of very severe trials, what *promise* did Job cling to? Job 19:25
    - 1.) What difference does the *promise* of the resurrection make in your life?
  - b. Paul was showing King Agrippa that he had lived with the same *hope* that *all* the Jews had. Paul's crime was that he proclaimed that the *promise of God* had been fulfilled. Record this fulfillment using Acts 13:32-33.
5. Record the question posed in Acts 26:8?
  - a. What belief or disbelief hindered you from believing God's plan of salvation for you?
    - 1.) In one or two sentences, describe your transformation as you believed.

6. *Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth* (Acts 26:9). What did Jesus declare would happen in John 16:2?
  - a. Why would they do this? John 16:3
  - b. Notice, the Jews claimed to know the Father, but rejected Jesus. Jesus declared this was not true. Why can a person not know God if she doesn't know Jesus? Challenge: Use Scripture to support your answer.
7. Consider Paul's strong feelings and misperceptions. How can a person feel so strongly about something and yet be wrong?

### **PAUL'S TESTIMONY OF MEETING JESUS: Read Acts 26:12-18**

1. Paul began verse 12 with the words *while I was thus occupied*. Although Paul was obsessed with *doing many things contrary to the name of Jesus*, Jesus was still able to penetrate his misperceptions. What did Paul see at *midday*?
  - a. The sun at *midday* in Israel can be very bright. But, a *brighter* light appeared to Paul. What do we learn about *light* from the following verses?

John 1:4,5

John 8:12

Revelation 21:23

    - 1.) In what ways has Jesus shined *light* into your life?
2. Paul, then heard the voice of Jesus (verse 15). What question did Jesus ask Paul (Saul) in verse 14?
  - a. Using Matthew 25:42-45, explain how a person can harm or help another and personally affect Jesus.
  - b. What statement did Jesus make to Paul in Acts 26:14?

Challenge: What did Jesus mean?

3. According to Acts 26:16, why did Jesus appear to Paul?
  - a. Considering this calling, of what are you a *witness*?
4. Using verses 17 and 18, what does *opening our eyes* free us from?
  - a. What understanding does 2 Timothy 2:26 give us of what it means to be under the *power of Satan*?
  - b. What are the glorious benefits?
    - 1.) 1 Peter 1:4 describes the inheritance of a believer. What does it say?
      - a.) What are you most looking forward to *inheriting*?
  - c. How might you incorporate these verses into a prayer for those who don't know Jesus?

### **PAUL'S LIFE AFTER MEETING JESUS: Acts 26:19-23**

1. Paul told King Agrippa that he *was not disobedient to the heavenly vision*. What did he declare to both Jews and Gentiles? verse 20.
  - a. Paul probably did not use the words *do works befitting of repentance*. How would you explain this command to someone who did not know Jesus as their Savior?
  - b. Record the glorious promise of Isaiah 55:7.
2. Paul was careful to state that he had said *no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come*. According to Acts 26:23, what three specific things did the prophets, Moses, and Paul say?
  - a. Record the following verses that state these truths:
 

Isaiah 53:2-12 (choose 3 facts)

Psalm 16:10

Isaiah 49:6

3. The prophets and Moses declared that the Messiah would come. Paul was declaring that the Messiah had come. They knew very little about what the Messiah would be like. What information would you add to describe Jesus to someone who only had the Old Testament prophecies?

### **KING AGRIPPA EVADES PAUL'S CHALLENGE: Read Acts 26:24-32**

1. Festus wrote Paul off as being *mad*. Paul did not seem to attempt to convince him otherwise. Rather, he focused his attention on King Agrippa. What question did Paul ask him? verse 27
  - a. What does Paul's question reveal about his goal for speaking to King Agrippa?
    - 1.) What lesson can you learn from this?
2. What was King Agrippa's response to Paul's question?
  - a.) Using synonyms, define the word *almost*.
  - b.) Paul used the word *almost* in verse 29, but he added another word. Using synonyms, define the word *altogether*.
    - 1.) What is the difference between *almost becoming a Christian* and *altogether becoming a Christian*?
    - 2.) What are some reasons a person stops at *almost becoming a Christian*?
    - 3.) If you had been in the crowd that day, what thoughts, fears, or doubts might have been on your mind?

3. Paul desired that King Agrippa and all those who heard him might be like him, *except for these chains*. Contrast the:
  - a. the physical *chains* of Paul with the spiritual *chains* of King Agrippa and those who were listening that day
  - b. the spiritual freedom of Paul and the spiritual freedom of King Agrippa and those who were listening that day
4. Summarize the conversation between Festus, King Agrippa, and Bernice. Acts 26:30-32

### REVIEW: Read Acts 26

1. What can we learn from:

Paul's life before meeting Jesus?

Paul's experience of meeting Jesus?

Paul's life after meeting Jesus?

King Agrippa's *almost* decision?

2. What was your favorite part in this lesson? Why?

*So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people,  
and they hear your words,  
but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love,  
but their hearts pursue their own gain.  
- Ezekiel 33:31*

## Observation Worksheet

### Acts 26:1-32

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: <sup>2</sup> "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, <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead? <sup>9</sup> Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> "While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> 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.' <sup>15</sup> So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, <sup>18</sup> 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.' <sup>19</sup> "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. <sup>22</sup> 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-- <sup>23</sup> 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." <sup>24</sup> Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!" <sup>25</sup> But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe." <sup>28</sup> Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian." <sup>29</sup> 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." <sup>30</sup> When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; <sup>31</sup> and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains." <sup>32</sup> Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."