

Paul Before Agrippa, Part 1

Scripture: Acts 25:13–26:3

Code: 1796

INTRODUCTION

I have had opportunities to speak to faculties of various seminaries from time to time. On one occasion, one of them asked me about the approach I took toward preaching. I told him my objective was expository. In teaching the Word of God I try to explain what it means by what it says. The faculty member said, "That's exactly what you're supposed to do." I told him I was glad to hear that confirmed. Then he said, "But do you ramble on, or do you try to tie the passage into a unit?" And of course I told him that I try to tie it into a unit, but I often have trouble getting one unit done at one time. When I approach a passage like Acts 25:13--26:32, I have a difficult time tying it together. That is quite a few verses--nearly fifty. However, it has to be taken as a unit because the story being told is a unit of thought.

We are looking at historical narrative. We're not examining the proclamation of doctrine; we're looking at the example of Paul and the pattern of his life. The Holy Spirit, for a very explicit reason, has repeatedly given us historical narrative so we might emulate Paul's actions, not just what he said. You should look for two things in this passage: the pattern that Paul used in evangelizing and the boldness of his character. Those appear to be the dominant features of this passage. He was a man who knew no fear and who knew what he wanted to accomplish in the presentation of the gospel.

A. The Objective

1. Of Christians in general

Christians often have been accused of trying to convert people. That's true; we are definitely trying to convert the unsaved. That is our goal. We are to go into the world to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ to the unredeemed that they might be redeemed. Some people have said, "Christians are always trying to convert Jews." That's right. Some rabbis have argued that Jews don't try to convert Christians, so why do Christians try to convert the Jews? Because we have this injunction from our Lord Jesus Christ: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). That is our objective.

2. Of Paul in specific

We could title Acts 25:13--26:32, "Are you trying to convert me?" because that's exactly what Paul tries to do to King Agrippa. In Acts 26:28 Agrippa told Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." I've heard many people interpret that verse as saying that there are many people who are on the verge of coming to Christ. But that is not what it is saying. The Greek text actually says, "Are you with so few words trying to convert me?" Agrippa was mocking Paul. But Paul was trying to

convert him and everyone else in the building. Paul's approach in this text is to gain the heart and soul of Agrippa. Paul was a man of objectives, and his goal was to move Agrippa into a position where he could understand the gospel and make an intelligent decision for Christ.

B. The Background

The apostle Paul had already been proven innocent in four different trials or hearings: before the mob, before the Sanhedrin, before Felix, and before Festus. The thing that stood out is that Paul hadn't done anything. He had not blasphemed God by desecrating the temple as he was accused. He had not defied Israel by disobeying the Mosaic Law. And he had not defied Rome by being an insurrectionist and creating riots against the government. Both the Jewish and Roman courts attested that he had not done those things. But he was retained as a prisoner because the Roman governors didn't have the courage to release him. They knew the Jewish leaders wanted him dead and they were afraid to let Paul go. They knew they would be pressured--that the Jews would start riots. So both Felix and Festus acquiesced to the leaders wishes by keeping Paul a prisoner and thereby avoiding their plan to execute him. They knew Paul was innocent. But they were being blackmailed by the Jewish leaders, as many previous Roman governors had been. Paul should have been released, but he remained imprisoned in Caesarea.

1. Paul's ultimate appeal

a

) To acquire justice

Paul realized that his life was in danger. He knew he wasn't going to get any justice in Caesarea. His only recourse was to take the only option that any Roman citizen could take when brought before any court in the world--he appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:11). He says, in effect, "I can't get any justice here." The Jewish leaders still wanted to kill him. They wanted him to go to Jerusalem so they could ambush him on the way. So Paul made his appeal. In verse 12 Festus said, "Unto Caesar shalt thou go." The only hope Paul had of getting out of trouble was to make his appeal before the court in Rome. That was a bold move because Nero, the emperor at that time, was insane. Submitting himself to the judgment of a man like Nero wasn't necessarily a good way out.

b) To obey God

Paul also knew that the Lord had promised him he would make it to Rome (Acts 23:11). The Lord had appeared to him in a cell in Jerusalem and told Paul he would go to Rome and preach the gospel. So Paul anticipated it.

By appealing to Caesar he fulfilled two things: he could be in a place where he would be more likely to receive justice, and he would be in obedience to God's will by going to the place God had designed him to go. Paul had a deep burden to go to Rome. When he wrote his letter to the Romans he said, "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift" (Rom. 1:11). According to Romans 15:24, he wanted to go to them on his way to Spain. In Acts 19:21 he planned to go to Jerusalem and then to Rome. Paul thought that if he could make an impact in Rome he could have a great impact on the Roman world. He had no other choice but to appeal his case to Rome, endeavoring to receive justice and follow God's will.

2. Festus' urgent problem

a

) A faultless prisoner

When Paul appealed to Rome, Festus had to acquiesce and send him. But Festus had a problem. A report had to accompany the prisoner. This report had to contain the accusations that were brought against the prisoner in the trial. But in Paul's case, there weren't any accusations that carried any weight. So Festus had an innocent prisoner on his hands who had to be sent to Rome and be put on trial. But he didn't have one thing to explain what the trial was about. There was not one thing Paul was guilty of. There weren't any eyewitnesses. The trial took place only because the Jewish leaders wanted Paul dead. They knew he was innocent, but they wanted him dead anyway.

The same thing was true in the case of Jesus. It didn't matter that He was innocent; the Jewish leaders hated Him because he rebuked their sin and unmasked their hypocrisy. They hated Paul for the same reasons. But there was no substantial accusation. So Festus was in a bind--he had to function within the law as a faithful Roman procurator, but he couldn't send a prisoner to Rome along with no accusations.

b

) A fortunate intervention

Fortunately for Festus, King Herod Agrippa II happened to arrive, making a courtesy call on this new procurator. Festus had just been appointed procurator of Judea. Agrippa was the neighboring vassal king. He arrived with his entourage to make a courtesy call on Festus to cement their relationship. Agrippa was the perfect man to help Festus determine an accusation against Paul. Festus thought the reason he couldn't figure out Paul's case was that it was Jewish in nature. When Agrippa, the Jewish king arrived, he thought he had someone who could untangle his problem.

LESSON

I. THE CONSULTATION OF PAUL'S TESTIMONY (25:13-22)

Agrippa and Festus had a brainstorming session to determine what they were going to do with Paul. Festus had to come up with some accusation and he needed Agrippa to help him.

A. Receiving the Royalty (v. 13)

"After certain days King Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to greet Festus."

1. Herod

Festus was the superior to Herod. Even though Herod was king, he was only a vassal king. The

Roman government had subjugated all Israel's authority, and Herod was nothing but a puppet king. In fact, He was reared for most of his life in Rome. It wasn't until his father died and he was given some territory to rule in Israel before he left Rome. And he spent the last days of his life in Rome. He was Roman in allegiance although he was part Jewish. As king he was in charge of the appointment of priests and the operation of the ceremonies of Jewish worship. So he was very familiar with the Jewish religion.

a

) His family

Agrippa was one of the Herods. The Herodian family was a family of kings. They dominate the rulership of the New Testament era. The rulers begin with Herod the Great and extend to Herod Agrippa II. He was the last of the Herods. Herod Agrippa II was the brother of Bernice. They had one of the most infamous relationships in all history because they lived in incest. Interestingly, Bernice was also the sister of Drusilla, the wife of Felix, who was the governor before Festus. Herod Agrippa II was the son of Herod Agrippa I, who had James beheaded and Peter imprisoned. According to Acts 12:21, he decided to have a day for himself in Caesarea. As he made a proclamation, the people said, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him ... and he was eaten of worms, and died" (Acts 12:22-23). That's how Herod Agrippa II's father passed on. Herod Agrippa II's great uncle, Herod Antipas, beheaded John the Baptist. And his great grandfather, Herod the Great, killed all the babies in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16). Agrippa II belonged to a disastrous family.

b

) His fidelity

It was proper for a Jewish king to pay a courtesy call on a new procurator. Agrippa was very accommodating to Rome. He had been reared in Rome and lived there until his father died in A.D. 44. Claudius, the emperor of Rome, wanted to appoint him to his father's kingdom, but Agrippa was only seventeen. Claudius waited another six years until he was twenty-three and gave him a part of the territory. Later, when he was 27, they gave him a little more. But Agrippa never ruled more than a relatively small area of Northern Palestine and Galilee. He was strictly a vassal king. He established his capital at Caesarea Philippi, a different Caesarea than the one on the coast of the Mediterranean. This city was located to the north. Agrippa had its name changed to Neronius to flatter Nero.

During the Jewish war, which brought on the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, he tried to prevent the Jews from revolting. But when Vespasian moved his troops against Jerusalem, he joined the Roman army and fought against the Jews. He was a traitor to Judaism. He eventually died in Rome, the last of the Herodian dynasty.

2. Bernice

a

) A sister of Agrippa

Bernice was Agrippa's sister. Josephus, the major historian of that era, said that they lived in incest (Antiquities 20.7.3). It was common knowledge. Every so often she would have an interlude with a lover, but would come back to Agrippa because the lover would leave her when he found out about the incest she kept perpetuating. In fact, Vespasian's son Titus, who was instrumental in the

destruction of Jerusalem, took Bernice as his lover. When he took her to Rome, the gossip became so bad around Rome that he had to dump her. But she went right back into her incest with Agrippa. They remained in that relationship the rest of their lives.

b

) A symbol of sin

Notice three verses: Acts 25:13 says, "After certain days King Agrippa and Bernice." Verse 23 says, "And on the next day, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice." Then Acts 26:30 says, "When he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice." Bernice wasn't left out of anything. Why would the Holy Spirit keep adding the phrase "and Bernice"? I think the Holy Spirit is pinpointing something very important. She is attached to Agrippa like an ugly disease. She is the symbol of his vice. There are two words that characterize Agrippa: And Bernice. Every time that man appears, Bernice is with him like a disease. Dr. H. A. Ironside said, "If Agrippa died unsaved, we may be sure God links Bernice with him still; and when Agrippa stands eventually at the judgment of the Great White Throne, Bernice will stand there with him! In other words, Bernice represents that sin, that evil thing in the life of a man and woman from which they can never be separated either in time or in eternity--if they do not judge the sin and get right before God.... Surely there is something intensely solemn here! Oh, the awfulness of sin! How it clings to one!" (Lectures on the Book of Acts [N. J.: Loizeaux Brothers, 1975], pp. 594-95). That's a vivid illustration.

Agrippa was decadent and immoral, and the descendent of an infamous family. But he did know some things about Judaism, and Festus needed to learn some things about Judaism. So Agrippa was a welcomed guest. Apparently Agrippa had a good reputation in Jewish matters because the apostle Paul acknowledges him as an expert in Acts 26:3.

B. Reviewing the Case (vv. 14-22)

1. The analysis of the case (v. 14)

"And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix."

Finally, the right time came and Festus told Agrippa that Felix left a certain man in prison when he was recalled by Rome. Festus begins to review for Herod the situation regarding Paul. Remember Acts 24:27 says that Felix left him in prison to do a favor for the Jews. That's the only reason Paul was still in prison. He was innocent.

2. The aggravation of the Jews (v. 15)

"About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him."

After spending a few days at Caesarea when he was inducted into the governorship, Festus immediately went to Jerusalem to try to develop some kind of relationship with the religious leaders. But as soon as he arrived, the chief priests and elders informed him that they wanted Paul to be condemned. They did not want a trial; they just wanted an execution. Festus was in a bad spot

because he didn't know why they wanted him dead or why Felix left him in bonds.

3. The avenue of justice (v. 16)

"To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before he who is accused have the accusers face to face, and have opportunity to answer for himself concerning the accusation laid against him."

Roman law prohibited the execution of a man without a trial. We have inherited that today. We have a legal system that allows the accused to face his accusers. All the evidence must be detailed and a verdict determined. That's what Roman justice demanded. The case had to come to a resolution before a sentence could be passed. On the basis of Roman justice, Festus couldn't honor the demand of the Jewish leaders. But they planned to blackmail Festus. If he wanted to have a successful rulership, he would have to honor their request. But Festus didn't allow them do that at the beginning. Since Roman law demanded a trial, he told them to come to Caesarea for an official trial.

4. The absence of accusations (vv. 17-18)

"Therefore, when they were come here, without any delay on the next day I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth; against whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation of such things as I [had continually] supposed"

Festus had probably manufactured some idea of what Paul had done. Claudius Lysias had done the same thing, supposing Paul to be an Egyptian rebel (Acts 21:38). I'm sure Felix had his ideas about who Paul was also. I'm sure Festus thought Paul had done something wrong, but the Jewish leaders didn't bring any accusations against him. That's why Festus had a problem. He had inherited an innocent man from Felix. He knew the leaders wanted him dead, but he couldn't figure out what Paul had done wrong. To make matters worse for Festus, Paul appealed to Caesar. So he had to send him to Rome, but he didn't have one thing to report.

5. The absurdity of the resurrection (v. 19)

"[The Jews] had certain questions against him of their own religion, and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive."

After seeing that no criminal accusation was brought against Paul, Festus discovered that the case centered on an argument about religion. All he could determine was that Paul was saying a dead man by the name of Jesus was alive. Festus thought Paul was out of his mind. He couldn't understand why the Jewish leaders would bother with him. Intelligent Romans knew that people didn't rise from the dead. To Festus, if Paul wanted to affirm that Jesus was alive, then he ought to be left alone because no one would believe him anyway. But Festus didn't understand the implications of the resurrection because he didn't understand the implications of the Messiah. He didn't understand the life and work of Jesus Christ. He didn't even know who Jesus was. And we can't expect Festus to understand. He was trapped in his ignorance. But he did become informed about the resurrection. No matter the situation, Paul always communicated the central issue--that Jesus is not dead, but alive. And we believe He is alive.

Festus badly needed Agrippa's help. He didn't even know why a trial was even necessary, yet Paul

appealed to Rome and he had to send him with some kind of accusation.

6. The acquiescence of Festus (v. 20)

"And because I was perplexed concerning such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters."

Festus told Agrippa he was confused about some of the facts and suggested that they go to Jerusalem. The truth is that the Jewish leaders were pressuring him to go to Jerusalem so they could ambush and kill Paul on the journey (Acts 25:3). But Festus wanted to look good in front of Agrippa, so he lied and said that he had determined to take Paul to Jerusalem for his own sake.

7. The appeal of Paul (v. 21)

"But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar."

Once Paul heard that he was going to Jerusalem, he appealed to Caesar. He knew that if he didn't receive justice in Caesarea, he was sure not to get it in Jerusalem. Paul took the route that every Roman citizen had. If he couldn't get justice where he was, he could appeal to Rome.

Verse 21 says that Paul appealed to "Augustus." That was not the current Caesar's name. Augustus is an adjective. The name Augustus Caesar is not a proper name for Caesar; it was an adjective for all the Caesars. When we say there was an august body, we are referring to a meeting of dignified individuals. The word for "Augustus" in the Greek text is sebastos. It comes from a root word that means, "to worship." So Augustus means, "the worshiped one," or "the revered one." Who was the revered one? The Augustus Caesar of that day was Nero, who could be properly called Augustus Caesar Nero. The term Augustus was first applied to Octavian, the first Roman emperor. It was then applied to each Caesar in succession. Paul wanted to see the revered and honorable Caesar.

Once Paul made the appeal, Festus had no choice--he commanded Paul to be retained in Caesarea until he could send him to Rome. But he couldn't send him because he didn't know what to tell Rome about him. He couldn't tell them that Paul was mad, claiming that someone was alive who was really dead. Rome wouldn't have been interested.

8. The anticipation of Agrippa (v. 22)

"Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. Tomorrow, said he, thou shalt hear him."

The phrase, "I would also hear the man myself," is in the imperfect tense. It gives the idea of a continuous action. Agrippa may have been continually wanting to hear from Paul himself, having already heard about him. Paul was a curiosity for Agrippa.

II. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF PAUL'S TESTIMONY (vv. 23-27)

A. The Contrast Between the Principals (v. 23)

1. The unsurpassing fantasia (v. 23a)

"And on the next day, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp."

Many of you may remember the Walt Disney film Fantasia. It is a spectacular animated feature accompanied by great classical music. Fantasia is the Greek word that is translated in verse 23 as "pomp." Agrippa appeared with his entire entourage with great pomp. You can imagine Agrippa and Bernice decked out in purple robes. The soldiers that served as a ceremonial guard would have been in their best uniforms. Of course all the important dignitaries would have been there.

2. The unimposing figure (v. 23b)

"[When they] entered into the place of hearing [the auditorium], with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth."

If we can believe tradition, Paul was not very imposing physically. With all the glitter in the auditorium, in walks a little bandy-legged, baldheaded, Jewish man who might not have seen too well. He was shackled by a chain as he stood in the middle of the auditorium. You can imagine people saying, "Did we come to hear this guy?" But it didn't matter what was going on around Paul because he always dominated the scene. Luke, the writer of Acts, displayed his great sense of humor in contrasting Paul with those in attendance. Agrippa, Bernice, and Festus were the fools putting on a big show, while Paul stood as the hero of the scene.

B. The Content of the Problem (vv. 24-27)

"Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men who are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him; of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore, I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O King Agrippa, that, after examination, I might have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not signify the accusations laid against him."

Festus was very open and honest about his problem. He couldn't send Paul to Rome without an accusation, so he turned his problem over to Agrippa. This wasn't an official trial, but merely a hearing to satisfy Agrippa's curiosity and to find an accusation that Festus could put in his report to Rome.

Paul didn't have to show up at the hearing. He ultimately would have been dragged in, but he didn't have to appear legally. He could have argued wisely from the law and said, "You can't take me in there. I've had my trial. I've been judged innocent and I pleaded my case to Rome." He might have been able to get out of it, but Paul didn't even try. Why wouldn't he want to get out of it? Because it was another platform for him to preach Christ. He turned everything that ever happened to him into an opportunity to preach Christ.

What a beautiful setting Paul had for preaching! The place was jammed with people who didn't know the Lord, and he had them all as an audience. The objective of the church is to go into the world and

preach the gospel. The church meets to pray, break bread together, fellowship, and study the Word of God, but it never meets to evangelize--it has to go out into the world to do that. Paul was confronting the world. He was surrounded by a Roman entourage and all the Jewish dignitaries of that part of the world. He was as bold and fearless as any man who ever lived. His testimony is fantastic. His presentation is dynamic and penetrating as he unmasks the sin of those present.

III. THE COMMENCEMENT OF PAUL'S TESTIMONY (26:1-18)

A. Paul's Readiness (v. 1)

"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself."

1. The message

Paul answered for himself. That's what Peter meant when he said, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). When we confront people with the claims of Christ and try to convert them, we need to know the right information. Paul said, "Be instant in season, out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2, KJV). Being instant means that you have the information. Don't be a concordance cripple! We ought to have a reservoir of knowledge of the Word of God on hand. We must be ready to give an answer to the one who asks the reason for the hope that is in us.

2. The master

The Lord Jesus Christ was a master of turning every opportunity to Himself in a way that none of us can duplicate. A woman at a well needed water. Christ told her that He was the water of life, and that she could have a well of water in her springing up to eternal life (John 4:14). Many people needed food so He fed them bread and said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). A great candelabra was in the middle of the Temple when Jesus walked in and said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). A high priest poured water out of a pitcher while the people thanked God. Jesus then said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37). Jesus was the master of turning every occasion to Himself. Paul drank deeply of that very same spirit. In case after case the circumstances became the platform for his proclamation.

You need to think like Jesus and Paul. One of the characteristics of successful evangelism is the ability to turn your circumstances into an opportunity to present the gospel and magnify the Lord Jesus Christ. How is that accomplished? By being ready and anxious to do it. It is really a question of boldness, not method. You can learn all the methods in the world on how to win people to the Lord, but nothing will happen if you're not walking in the Spirit and allowing Him to move your heart to be bold enough to speak. The apostle Paul was ready to speak. He had been waiting two years to say something, and now he had his opportunity.

Two testimonies

Martin Niemoller was a German pastor who was arrested by the Nazis and spent nine years in prison. At the end of World War II, he came to America when he was released. There was much interest in his arrival, so he traveled across America and spoke about the horrors of nine years in a Nazi prison. Two reporters commented on Niemoller and his speech in one city: "Imagine," said one reporter disgustedly, "nine years in a Nazi prison and all he can talk about is Jesus Christ!" Isn't that a great testimony? Paul spent only two years in confinement in Caesarea and all he could talk about was Jesus Christ. Paul's testimony was always about Jesus Christ.

There was a great man of God who was a great soul winner. Someone asked him what made him so fruitful in winning people to Christ. He said, "One day I prayed a prayer that changed my life. I asked God to give me the opportunity, that every time I'm able to introduce the topic of conversation, it would always be Jesus Christ." That's what changed his life. God only knows how many people he won to Jesus Christ because He is all he ever talked about.

Paul talked about Jesus Christ. Two years of imprisonment hadn't paled his desire to speak. I'm sure as he looked at Agrippa, his heart grieved. Paul had the love of God toward that man, and wanted him to hear the gospel. Paul was about to speak to Agrippa concerning Jesus Christ. He was going to testify about Jesus being alive from the dead--the thing he said over and over. Wouldn't it be great if the world said of us, "Did you know those people keep saying that Jesus is alive?" Wouldn't it be great if that was our reputation?

B. Paul's Report (vv. 2-18)

1. His courtesy (vv. 2-3)

"I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee concerning all the things of which I am accused of the Jews, especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews; wherefore, I beseech thee to hear me patiently."

Paul addressed the key figure in the room, Agrippa, which was courtesy. But he knew everyone else was going to listen. And they were especially going to listen when they knew he was addressing the king. Two men stand in confrontation--one stands a prisoner, the other sits a king. But the one is an enslaved king and the other an enthroned prisoner. In Paul's heart was the conversion of Agrippa. When Paul ended his testimony in Acts 26:28, Agrippa said, "Are you trying to convert me?" That's exactly what Paul was trying to do, and not only Agrippa, but everyone else as well. Beginning in Acts 26:4 is one of the supreme defenses of the Christian faith. And it began with a courteous approach to Agrippa.

Paul's testimony was not so much a defense of the Christian faith as it was a proclamation. When you are drawn before the tribunals of the world, your purpose is not to defend yourself but to win people to Jesus Christ. That is always our purpose. Paul didn't complain about his circumstances; he presented the gospel. Paul must have thought that Agrippa would be open to the gospel. Agrippa would have understood Paul's logic and reasoning because he understood the Jewish situation and customs. But at the same time he wouldn't be sympathetic to the Sanhedrin because of his

allegiance to Rome. So Paul figured he had an objective listener--one who was objective as a Roman, yet oriented toward Judaism. Agrippa might have been a potential convert. Paul also realized the influence Agrippa would have if he became a believer. Was Paul trying to convert Agrippa? Absolutely. We make no apology as Christians; we're trying to convert everyone we can!

Focusing on the Facts

1. What are the two dominant features about Paul that one can find in Acts 25:13--26:32?
2. What is the objective of a Christian (Mark 16:15)?
3. Why was Paul kept as a prisoner when he had been proven innocent?
4. Why did Paul appeal his case to Caesar?
5. Why did Paul want to take the gospel to Rome?
6. Explain the problem Festus had when Paul appealed his case to Caesar.
7. Why did Festus think that Agrippa was the perfect man to solve his problem?
8. Why did Agrippa have knowledge of Jewish religious worship?
9. Describe Agrippa's relationship with Rome.
10. What is significant about Bernice's attachment to Agrippa?
11. Why couldn't Festus honor the Jewish leaders' demand to have Paul executed (Acts 25:16)?
12. Why did Festus decide to take Paul back to Jerusalem (Acts 16:20)?
13. Explain the meaning of "Augustus" (Acts 25:21).
14. Why didn't Paul have to appear at the hearing before Agrippa? Why did he appear?
15. What makes evangelism different from other ministries that the church carries out?
16. What should every Christian do before he confronts unbelievers with the claims of Christ (1 Pet. 3:15)?
17. Give some examples of how Jesus turned everyday situations into opportunities to proclaim Himself.

18. What is more important in evangelism, the method or the boldness on the part of the presenter? Explain your answer.

19. What is the purpose for every Christian brought before the tribunals of the world?

Pondering the Principles

1. When Paul made his appeal to Caesar, he took advantage of a right he had as a Roman citizen. Have you ever thought about how fortunate it was for Paul that he was a Roman citizen? But he was more than fortunate because God used his citizenship to create inroads for the gospel in many new areas around the world. A Jew like Peter wouldn't have had the same access. What about you? Has God used you in certain ministries that have taken advantage of your background or experiences? If He has, then you have seen God's sovereign plan at work. Thank Him for the design He has for your life. Thank Him not only for the way He has gifted you, but also for the experiences He has brought you through, even if some of them occurred while you were an unbeliever. Remember, every aspect of your life has fallen within the divine plan of God. Praise Him for that.

2. What happens when you are faced with an opportunity to proclaim Christ to someone? Do you take advantage of the opportunity, or do you let it slip away? But we have a greater calling than to just take advantage of the opportunities presented to us, for we should be seeking to create opportunities to share Christ also. We need to have the perspective of the man of God who wanted to start every conversation about Jesus Christ (see p. 11). Paul didn't have to appear before Agrippa, but he did so he could share Christ with him. Beginning today, seek opportunities to share Christ. Ask God to give you His discernment so you can know when you should share the gospel. When the opportunity comes, be bold in your presentation. Remember that the Holy Spirit will give you that boldness.

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