

THE BOOK OF ACTS

ACTS 26:1-32 | LESSON SUMMARY

Injustice

ACTS 26:4, "My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews." (ESV)

- Paul connects first with his audience, relaying the facts
 - Paul first reflects on his life as "Saul"
 - He was not only a devout Jew but the strictest of the Pharisees
 - His account is so specific it's almost a confession: he traveled even abroad to capture Christians and then at times, compelled them to blaspheme
 - As a member of the Sanhedrin, Paul cast his votes against Christians, meaning he actively participated in their deaths
 - Something dramatic must have happened in order to take such a radical persecutor of Christians and turn him into one willing to die for Christ
- Paul gives an impassioned account of his conversion
 - "Kick against goads" loses a bit in translation
 - κέντρον = a sting
 - Paul refers to ancient Proverb meaning a vain existence



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ACTS 26:19, "Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance."

- Paul is far less concerned with proving his innocence than evangelizing
- Although his defense is brilliant, his emphasis is less on refuting the evidence (or lack thereof) and more on witnessing to those before him
- Festus recognizes how learned Paul is, but his testimony is too much for Festus
 - "Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind." (26:24)
 - 1 Corinthians 1:18, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (NIV)
- Paul boldly turns to challenge Agrippa

ACTS 26:27, "King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." (ESV)



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- Paul knows that King Agrippa is not ignorant and he has enough information at this point to make a decision for Christ
 - Paul challenges him in front of everyone
 - Agrippa proves to be a coward
 - His words could easily read as mocking
 - "And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?" (26:28)
- Paul never waivers in his efforts to persuade all to believe
 - "I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains." (26:29)

ACTS 26:32, "And Agrippa said to Festus, 'This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.'"

- All recognize Paul's innocence
- Regardless, Paul sent to Caesar

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: David M. Jacobson, *Agrippa II; the Last of the Herods*, Kelly Leslie, *Philosophers, Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire: authority, text and tradition*, F.F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*

