

Paul Before King Agrippa

Key Verse: “*He said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.*”
—Acts 26:25

Selected Scripture:
Acts 26:19-32

TODAY’S LESSON COM-

mences in Caesarea where Paul had been a prisoner for two years. The Jewish rulers had sought Paul’s death because of what he taught after he became a follower of Jesus Christ. When allowed to testify before Agrippa, the Roman governor of that area, Paul expressed

gratitude for being allowed to present his case before someone who was conversant with the customs and questions which related to the Jewish people. (Acts 26:3) After attesting that he had been faithful to the Jewish religion from his youth, Paul asserted the reason for his being brought to trial. “Now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”—vss. 6-8

In the continuing narrative concerning his life prior to his conversion, Paul expressed his relentless campaign against those who followed the Christian faith. However, while he was in route to Damascus to arrest

Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment, Paul explained, he had a transforming experience. He was blinded at midday by a great light from above, and he heard a voice asking, “Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me?”—vss. 9-14

Next, Paul summarized the commission he had received after hearing the voice of the risen Lord, Christ Jesus. It included the fact that he was to testify and be a witness of what he had seen. Additionally, Paul was especially to minister to the Gentiles concerning the means by which they would receive forgiveness from their sins. As a Gentile, after hearing but not understanding all these things, Festus accused Paul of being crazed because of his much learning.—vss. 15-24

In our Key Verse, Paul told Festus he was not mad, but was simply declaring the truth concerning God’s plan of redemption for all mankind. Paul then appealed to King Agrippa, by asking whether he believed the prophetic testimony concerning Christ as the promised Messiah. Without waiting for Agrippa to answer, Paul concluded, “I know that thou believest.” (vs. 27) Although the *King James Version* renders Agrippa’s response, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (vs. 28), the *Revised Standard Version* suggests his sentiments were more likely, “Do you think in this short time you are going to make me a Christian?”

Paul’s faithfulness in declaring the importance of Christ’s death and resurrection, even to those who could not accept this truth, is a powerful example to emulate by all who are consecrated followers of the Master. The only solution for present difficult and perplexing conditions on earth is the establishment of God’s kingdom in the not too distant future. That will be the time when this scriptural promise will come to pass: “I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.”—Hag. 2:7 ■