

# **CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY**

## **BIBLE STUDY**

### **Acts Chapter 26 — Paul's Testimony Before King Agrippa**

#### **A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible**

##### **Introduction**

Acts Chapter 26 records one of Paul's clearest and most powerful defenses of the gospel.

Paul now stands before:

**King Agrippa.**

**Bernice.**

**Governor Festus.**

Military leaders.

Prominent citizens.

Once again:

The prisoner becomes the preacher.

The man in chains becomes the man carrying the most important message in the room.

Paul does not merely defend himself legally.

He gives:

**His testimony.**

He explains:

His Jewish background.

His life as a Pharisee.

His hope in God's promises.

His persecution of Christians.

His encounter with Jesus.

His commission from Christ.

His obedience to the heavenly vision.

His preaching of repentance.

His belief in the suffering and resurrection of the Messiah.

Then he turns directly to Agrippa.

Acts 26 therefore contains:

Defense.

Testimony.

Doctrine.

Evangelism.

Appeal.

Paul begins respectfully.

He knows Agrippa understands Jewish customs and controversies.

Then Paul says the real issue is:

**Hope in the promise God made to Israel.**

He asks:

**“Why should any of you think it impossible that God raises the dead?”**

That question reaches the heart of the controversy.

If God is truly God:

Resurrection is not impossible.

Then Paul tells the truth about his past.

He once believed:

He should oppose Jesus.

He imprisoned Christians.

He approved their deaths.

He tried to force believers to blaspheme.

He hunted them into foreign cities.

Paul does not make himself look better than he was.

Then comes the turning point:

Jesus appeared.

A light brighter than the sun surrounded Paul and his companions.

Jesus said:

**“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”**

Paul asks:

**“Who are You, Lord?”**

Jesus answers:

**“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.”**

The enemy of Christ is confronted by:

The risen Christ.

Then Jesus commissions him.

Paul is sent to:

Open eyes.

Turn people:

From darkness to light.

From Satan’s power to God.

So they may receive:

Forgiveness.

And:

An inheritance among those sanctified by faith in Christ.

Paul then says something every Christian should desire to say:

**“I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.”**

He preached:

Repentance.

Turning to God.

And lives demonstrating repentance.

Because of this:

He was attacked.

But Paul says:

**“God has helped me to this very day.”**

Then he explains that his message is not a rejection of Moses and the prophets.

It is the fulfillment of what they said would happen:

The Messiah would suffer.

The Messiah would rise.

Light would go to:

Israel.

And:

The Gentiles.

Festus interrupts:

**“You are out of your mind, Paul!”**

Paul calmly responds:

**“I am not insane, most excellent Festus. What I am saying is true and reasonable.”**

Then Paul turns directly toward Agrippa:

**“King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.”**

Agrippa answers:

**“You almost persuade me to become a Christian.”**

That is one of the most sobering statements in Acts.

**Almost.**

Near.

Moved.

Challenged.

Persuaded.

But:

Not surrendered.

Paul’s response reveals his evangelistic heart.

He does not say:

I only want freedom.

Instead:

**“I pray to God that not only you, but all who are listening to me today, may become as I am—except for these chains.”**

Paul wants:

Their salvation.

More than:

His release.

The chapter ends with the rulers agreeing:

Paul has done nothing deserving:

Death.

Or:

Imprisonment.

Agrippa even says:

**“This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”**

But Paul’s appeal will carry him toward:

Rome.

The central truth of Acts 26 is:

**The risen Jesus transforms enemies into witnesses, sends His servants to proclaim repentance, forgiveness, and light to all people, and calls every hearer to move beyond being almost persuaded into genuine faith and obedience.**

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# **I. AGRIPPA ALLOWS PAUL TO SPEAK**

## **Acts 26:1**

**“Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You may speak for yourself.’ Paul stretched out his hand and began his defense.”**

Paul finally receives the floor.

## **Cross References**

### **Acts 21:40**

Paul had previously stood before another hostile audience and motioned with his hand before speaking.

### **Acts 13:16**

Paul had used a similar gesture when addressing people in a synagogue.

### **Acts 24:10**

He had also calmly presented his defense before Felix.

### **Spiritual Principle**

God can give His servant a voice in rooms where humanly he appears to have no power.

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## **II. PAUL IS GLAD TO SPEAK BEFORE AGRIPPA**

### **Acts 26:2**

“King Agrippa, I am glad to stand before you today and answer the charges made by the Jews.”

Paul sees opportunity.

### **Cross References**

Philippians 1:7

Paul understood the defense and confirmation of the gospel as part of his calling.

1 Peter 3:15

Believers are told to be ready to give an answer for the hope within them.

Acts 22:1

Paul had already given another public defense before his Jewish countrymen.

### **Spiritual Principle**

A difficult hearing can still be a gospel opportunity.

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## **III. AGRIPPA UNDERSTANDS JEWISH MATTERS**

### **Acts 26:3**

“I know that you are familiar with Jewish customs and controversies, so I ask you to listen patiently.”

Paul appeals to Agrippa’s knowledge.

### **Cross References**

Acts 22:3

Paul himself had been deeply educated in Jewish law and tradition.

James 1:19

Scripture teaches people to be quick to hear and slow to speak.

Job 33:31

Careful listening is necessary when serious matters are being discussed.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Wise communication begins by understanding what the audience already knows.

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## **IV. PAUL'S LIFE WAS WELL KNOWN**

### **Acts 26:4**

“The Jewish people all know the way I have lived since my youth, from the beginning in my own country and later in Jerusalem.”

Paul's background was public.

### **Cross References**

Galatians 1:14

Paul had advanced in Judaism beyond many of his contemporaries.

Philippians 3:5

He possessed an impressive Jewish pedigree and Pharisaic background.

Acts 22:3

He had been raised in Jerusalem and educated under Gamaliel.

### **Spiritual Principle**

A testimony becomes especially powerful when people know the former life from which Christ brought someone.

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## **V. PAUL HAD BEEN A STRICT PHARISEE**

### **Acts 26:5**

“They have known me for a long time and can testify that I lived as a Pharisee, following the strictest rules of our religion.”

Paul had not been:

Careless.

Irreligious.

Spiritually indifferent.

He had been:

Extremely religious.

### **Cross References**

Acts 22:3

Paul had been trained strictly in the ancestral law.

Philippians 3:5

He identified himself as a Pharisee concerning the law.

Acts 23:6

Paul had already referred to his Pharisaic background before the Sanhedrin.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Strict religion cannot replace saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

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## **VI. PAUL IS ON TRIAL BECAUSE OF HOPE**

### **Acts 26:6**

“And now I am on trial because of my hope in the promise God made to our ancestors.”

Paul presents Christianity as fulfillment.

Not destruction.

### **Cross References**

Acts 23:6

Paul had said he was on trial because of resurrection hope.

Acts 28:20

He would later describe himself as bound because of the hope of Israel.

Galatians 3:16

Paul taught that God’s covenant promises ultimately find fulfillment in Christ.

### **Spiritual Principle**

The gospel fulfills God’s redemptive promises rather than abandoning them.

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## VII. ISRAEL HOPED FOR THE PROMISE

### Acts 26:7

“This is the same promise our twelve tribes hope to see fulfilled as they serve God day and night. For this hope, O king, I am accused by the Jews.”

Paul sees continuity in the biblical story.

### Cross References

Acts 24:15

Paul had confessed hope in the resurrection.

James 1:1

James addressed believers from the twelve tribes scattered among the nations.

Luke 2:37

Faithful Israelites such as Anna served God continually while awaiting His redemption.

### Spiritual Principle

Biblical hope looks forward to God keeping every promise He has made.

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## VIII. “WHY SHOULD RESURRECTION SEEM IMPOSSIBLE?”

### Acts 26:8

“Why should any of you think it impossible that God raises the dead?”

This question exposes the real issue.

### Cross References

1 Corinthians 15:13

Paul argued that denying resurrection undermines the resurrection of Christ.

Romans 4:17

God gives life to the dead and calls into existence what does not yet exist.

Acts 17:32

Some Athenians mocked Paul specifically when they heard about resurrection.

## **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

**“If God Is Truly God, Resurrection Is Not Too Difficult for Him.”**

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## **IX. PAUL ONCE OPPOSED JESUS**

### **Acts 26:9**

“I once thought I should do everything I could to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth.”

Notice:

“I thought.”

Paul was convinced.

But wrong.

### **Cross References**

Acts 8:3

Saul attempted to destroy the church.

Galatians 1:13

Paul later confessed his violent persecution of believers.

1 Timothy 1:13

Paul remembered that he had once been a blasphemer and persecutor.

## **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

A sincere conviction can still be false if it contradicts the truth about Christ.

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## **X. PAUL IMPRISONED THE SAINTS**

### **Acts 26:10**

“That is exactly what I did in Jerusalem. With authority from the chief priests, I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I gave my approval.”

Paul does not minimize his guilt.

### **Cross References**

Acts 7:58

Those who stoned Stephen placed their clothing at Saul's feet.

Acts 8:1

Saul approved Stephen's death.

Acts 9:1

Saul continued threatening and persecuting the disciples.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Grace shines brightest when we honestly understand the guilt from which Christ saved us.

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## **XI. PAUL TRIED TO FORCE BELIEVERS TO BLASPHEME**

### **Acts 26:11**

"In every synagogue I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities."

Paul's persecution was intense.

### **Cross References**

Acts 9:2

Saul sought authority to arrest believers even in Damascus.

Acts 22:19

Paul later remembered imprisoning and beating believers.

Galatians 1:13

He described his former persecution as violent and destructive.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Christ did not merely save Paul from indifference; He saved a determined enemy.

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## **XII. PAUL TRAVELS TOWARD DAMASCUS**

### **Acts 26:12**

"On one of those journeys, I was going to Damascus with the authority of the chief priests."

Paul had:

Authority.

Documents.

A mission.

Confidence.

But:

He was moving directly against God.

### **Cross References**

Acts 9:2

Saul carried letters authorizing the arrest of Christians in Damascus.

Acts 22:5

Paul had previously described receiving official authority for the mission.

Galatians 1:17

Damascus later became a major location in Paul's early Christian story.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Human authority cannot protect a person from being wrong before God.

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## **XIII. LIGHT BRIGHTER THAN THE SUN**

### **Acts 26:13**

“About noon, O king, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those traveling with me.”

At noon:

The sun was already bright.

Yet:

The heavenly light was brighter.

### **Cross References**

Acts 9:3

A sudden heavenly light surrounded Saul.

Acts 22:6

Paul described the same event occurring near midday.

2 Corinthians 4:6

Paul later used light imagery to describe God revealing the glory of Christ.

### **Spiritual Principle**

The glory of Christ can break into the darkest spiritual blindness.

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## **XIV. JESUS CONFRONTS SAUL**

### **Acts 26:14**

“We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice speaking in the Hebrew language: ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to fight against the goads.’”

Jesus confronts Paul personally.

### **Cross References**

Acts 9:4

Jesus asked Saul why he was persecuting Him.

Acts 22:7

Paul had already testified to the same words before the Jerusalem crowd.

Exodus 3:4

God called Moses personally by name when commissioning him.

### **“Fighting Against the Goads”**

The imagery describes:

Resistance against painful correction.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Fighting against God does not injure God; it injures the person resisting Him.

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## **XV. “I AM JESUS”**

### **Acts 26:15**

“I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The Lord replied, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.’”

The turning point is:

Jesus.

## **Cross References**

Acts 9:5

Jesus directly identified Himself to Saul.

Acts 22:8

Paul repeated this same revelation before the Jerusalem crowd.

1 Corinthians 15:8

Paul later included himself among those who had seen the risen Christ.

## **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

**“Conversion Begins When We See Jesus for Who He Truly Is.”**

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# **XVI. PAUL IS APPOINTED AS SERVANT AND WITNESS**

## **Acts 26:16**

“Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and a witness of what you have seen and will see of me.”

Jesus saves Paul and immediately gives him purpose.

## **Cross References**

Acts 9:6

Saul was told to rise and wait for further instruction.

Acts 22:10

Paul had asked what the Lord wanted him to do.

Ezekiel 2:1

God told Ezekiel to stand before receiving his prophetic commission.

## **Spiritual Principle**

Salvation creates servants and witnesses.

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# **XVII. JESUS PROMISES PROTECTION AND MISSION**

## **Acts 26:17**

“I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them.”

Paul’s calling includes:

Danger.

Protection.

Mission.

## **Cross References**

Acts 9:15

Paul was chosen to carry Christ’s name before Gentiles, kings, and Israel.

Jeremiah 1:8

God told Jeremiah not to fear because He would be with him to rescue him.

Galatians 1:16

Paul understood his calling as a mission to proclaim Christ among the Gentiles.

## **Spiritual Principle**

God’s protection serves God’s mission.

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# **XVIII. FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT**

## **Acts 26:18**

“To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

This verse gives one of the clearest descriptions of salvation in Acts.

## **Open Their Eyes**

Spiritual understanding.

## **Darkness to Light**

Transformation.

## **Satan to God**

Change of spiritual allegiance.

## **Forgiveness of Sins**

Guilt removed.

## **An Inheritance**

A place among God's sanctified people.

## **By Faith in Christ**

The means of receiving salvation.

## **Cross References**

Isaiah 42:7

The Servant of the Lord would open blind eyes and bring prisoners out of darkness.

Ephesians 5:8

Believers were once darkness but are now light in the Lord.

Colossians 1:13

God rescues believers from the authority of darkness and transfers them into the kingdom of His Son.

## **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

**“The Gospel Does Not Merely Improve People; It Transfers Them From Darkness to Light and From Satan’s Power to God.”**

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# **XIX. PAUL OBEYS THE VISION**

## **Acts 26:19**

“So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.”

This summarizes Paul's ministry.

## **Cross References**

Acts 9:20

Paul quickly began proclaiming Jesus after his conversion.

Galatians 1:16

Paul responded to God's call to preach Christ among the Gentiles.

Acts 22:10

His first response to Jesus had been to ask what he should do.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

**“A Calling From God Is Proven by Obedience, Not Merely by an Experience.”**

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## **XX. PAUL PREACHES REPENTANCE**

### **Acts 26:20**

“First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent, turn to God, and prove their repentance by their deeds.”

This is practical conversion.

#### **Repent**

Change of mind and direction.

#### **Turn to God**

Positive movement toward Him.

#### **Deeds Appropriate to Repentance**

Visible fruit.

#### **Cross References**

Acts 9:20

Paul immediately proclaimed Jesus in Damascus.

Acts 9:29

He later preached boldly in Jerusalem.

Matthew 3:8

John the Baptist called people to produce fruit consistent with repentance.

#### **Important Truth**

Good works do not purchase salvation.

But:

Real repentance should produce changed conduct.

## **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Works do not create repentance, but genuine repentance creates new works.

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# **XXI. PAUL IS ATTACKED FOR PREACHING**

## **Acts 26:21**

“That is why some Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me.”

Paul explains the real cause of the conflict.

## **Cross References**

Acts 21:31

The mob had attempted to kill Paul in Jerusalem.

Acts 21:27

Jews from Asia had seized him at the temple.

2 Corinthians 11:26

Paul repeatedly faced dangers from many different sources.

## **Spiritual Principle**

Faithfulness may provoke hostility, but hostility does not prove the message is wrong.

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# **XXII. “GOD HAS HELPED ME”**

## **Acts 26:22**

“But God has helped me to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen.”

Paul knows why he is still standing.

Not:

Luck.

Skill.

Roman politics.

But:

God helped me.

### **Cross References**

Acts 24:14

Paul had already affirmed his belief in the Law and the Prophets.

Luke 24:27

Jesus explained from Moses and the prophets the things concerning Himself.

1 Peter 1:11

The prophets testified beforehand about Christ's sufferings and subsequent glory.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

**“If You Are Still Standing After Everything Meant to Stop You, Remember Who Helped You Stand.”**

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## **XXIII. THE MESSIAH WOULD SUFFER AND RISE**

### **Acts 26:23**

“That the Christ would suffer, and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

Paul summarizes the prophetic gospel.

#### **The Messiah Would Suffer**

The cross.

#### **The Messiah Would Rise**

Resurrection.

#### **Light Would Reach Israel and Gentiles**

Mission.

### **Cross References**

Isaiah 42:6

God's Servant would become a light extending God's salvation beyond Israel.

Isaiah 49:6

The Servant would bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

1 Corinthians 15:20

Christ is called the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

The cross, resurrection, and worldwide proclamation of Christ belong together in the gospel.

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## **XXIV. FESTUS CALLS PAUL INSANE**

### **Acts 26:24**

“At this point Festus interrupted Paul: ‘You are out of your mind, Paul! Your great learning is driving you insane.’”

Festus cannot accept Paul’s conclusion.

### **Cross References**

Mark 3:21

People once said similar things about Jesus.

John 10:20

Some accused Jesus of madness and demonic influence.

1 Corinthians 1:23

The message of Christ crucified appears foolish to those who reject God’s wisdom.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Truth may sound foolish to someone whose worldview has no place for God’s supernatural action.

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## **XXV. PAUL RESPONDS CALMLY**

### **Acts 26:25**

“Paul replied, ‘I am not insane, most excellent Festus. What I am saying is true and reasonable.’”

Paul does not retaliate.

### **Cross References**

1 Corinthians 1:18

The message of the cross appears foolish to those who are perishing but is God’s power to those being saved.

2 Corinthians 5:13

Paul was willing to be misunderstood if his life and ministry served God.

2 Timothy 1:7

God gives His people a spirit of power, love, and sound judgment rather than cowardice.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Being mocked does not require becoming mocking.

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## **XXVI. “THIS WAS NOT DONE IN A CORNER”**

### **Acts 26:26**

“The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner.”

Christianity rests on public claims.

### **Cross References**

John 18:20

Jesus said He had spoken openly rather than secretly.

Acts 4:20

The apostles insisted they could not stop speaking about what they had seen and heard.

Acts 2:22

Peter appealed to publicly known events concerning Jesus.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

The gospel is rooted in public historical claims, not secret spiritual speculation.

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## **XXVII. PAUL DIRECTLY CHALLENGES AGRIPPA**

### **Acts 26:27**

“King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.”

Paul moves from:

Defense.

To:

Evangelistic appeal.

### **Cross References**

Luke 24:25

Jesus rebuked disciples for being slow to believe what the prophets had spoken.

John 5:39

Jesus said the Scriptures testify about Him.

2 Peter 1:19

Prophetic Scripture provides reliable light pointing toward God's truth.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

**“Faithful Evangelism Eventually Moves From Information to Personal Decision.”**

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## **XXVIII. “ALMOST PERSUADED”**

### **Acts 26:28**

“Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You almost persuade me to become a Christian.’”

These words are deeply sobering.

#### **Almost**

Near.

Affected.

Confronted.

But:

Not surrendered.

### **Cross References**

Mark 12:34

Jesus once told a man that he was not far from the kingdom of God.

Acts 24:25

Felix trembled under conviction but postponed response.

Ezekiel 33:31

People can listen eagerly to God's words while refusing to obey them.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

## **“Almost Saved Is Still Lost.”**

Being:

Almost persuaded.

Almost surrendered.

Almost obedient.

Is not:

Faith.

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## **XXIX. PAUL DESIRES THEIR SALVATION**

### **Acts 26:29**

“Paul answered, ‘I pray to God that not only you, but all who are listening to me today, may become as I am—except for these chains.’”

Paul does not ask primarily:

Release me.

He desires:

Save them.

### **Cross References**

Ephesians 6:20

Paul called himself an ambassador in chains.

Philippians 1:13

His imprisonment became known throughout the imperial guard.

2 Timothy 2:9

Paul later said he was chained like a criminal, but God's Word was not chained.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

## **“The Prisoner Wanted the Freedom of His Audience More Than His Own.”**

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# XXX. THE HEARING ENDS

## Acts 26:30

“The king, the governor, Bernice, and all who were sitting with them got up.”

The formal proceeding concludes.

### Cross References

Acts 25:23

These rulers and officials had entered the hearing with great ceremony.

Luke 23:13

Political rulers had similarly gathered during Jesus’ trial.

Matthew 27:19

Important decisions surrounding innocent prisoners often drew multiple officials into the process.

### Spiritual Principle

Every gospel opportunity eventually reaches a moment when the hearing ends and the hearer must live with what was heard.

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# XXXI. PAUL IS DECLARED INNOCENT

## Acts 26:31

“They left the room and talked together, saying, ‘This man has done nothing that deserves death or imprisonment.’”

Again:

Paul’s innocence is recognized.

### Cross References

Luke 23:4

Pilate repeatedly declared that he found no criminal basis for condemning Jesus.

Acts 25:25

Festus had already said Paul had done nothing deserving death.

Acts 23:29

Claudius Lysias had reached the same conclusion.

## **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Repeated official verdicts of innocence reveal that Paul suffered not as a criminal but because of the gospel controversy surrounding Jesus.

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# **XXXII. AGRIPPA SAYS PAUL COULD HAVE BEEN FREE**

## **Acts 26:32**

“Agrippa said to Festus, ‘This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.’”

Humanly:

The appeal appears to prolong imprisonment.

But spiritually:

It becomes the route to Rome.

## **Cross References**

Acts 25:11

Paul had formally appealed to Caesar.

Acts 28:19

Paul later explains why he made the appeal.

Acts 25:12

Festus had already ruled that Paul would go to Caesar.

## **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

What looks like a lost opportunity for freedom may still be part of God’s larger mission.

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# **XXXIII. PAUL’S TESTIMONY AS A MODEL**

Acts 26 gives us a powerful testimony structure.

## **1. Who I Was**

A Pharisee.

A persecutor.

An enemy.

## **2. How Jesus Confronted Me**

Damascus road.

## **3. What Jesus Called Me to Become**

Servant.

Witness.

Missionary.

## **4. How I Responded**

“I was not disobedient.”

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

A strong testimony explains the old life, the encounter with Christ, the changed life, and the mission that followed.

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## **XXXIV. ZEAL WITHOUT CHRIST CAN OPPOSE GOD**

Paul believed he was defending God.

Instead:

He was persecuting Christ.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Religious zeal must be submitted to revealed truth.

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## **XXXV. GOD’S GRACE TRANSFORMS ENEMIES**

Paul moves from:

Persecutor.

To:

Preacher.

## **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

**“Never Decide That Someone Is Too Hostile for Christ to Save.”**

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## **XXXVI. “WHY THINK RESURRECTION IMPOSSIBLE?”**

This question still matters.

If God:

Created life.

Then:

Raising the dead is not beyond His power.

### **Spiritual Principle**

The real barrier to resurrection is not God’s ability but human unbelief.

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## **XXXVII. THE RISEN JESUS IS THE HEART OF PAUL’S TESTIMONY**

Paul’s life changed because:

Jesus is alive.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Christianity cannot be reduced to ethical advice from a dead teacher; it rests upon the living Christ.

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## **XXXVIII. “I AM JESUS”**

This answer destroyed Paul’s old worldview.

The One Paul rejected:

Was Lord.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Every person must eventually answer the question: Who is Jesus?

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## XXXIX. FROM PERSECUTOR TO SERVANT

Jesus does not merely stop Saul.

He commissions him.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Grace does more than cancel guilt; it redirects the life once controlled by sin.

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## XL. FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

Acts 26:18 gives a powerful salvation picture.

### **Darkness**

Ignorance.

Sin.

Spiritual bondage.

### **Light**

Truth.

Life.

Christ.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Salvation is a transfer from one spiritual realm and allegiance to another.

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## XLI. FROM SATAN TO GOD

Paul does not present unbelief as spiritually neutral.

### **Spiritual Principle**

The gospel liberates people from the dominion of darkness and brings them under the gracious rule of God.

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## XLII. FORGIVENESS OF SINS

The mission leads to:

Forgiveness.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

The gospel does not merely expose guilt; it announces that guilt can be forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ.

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## **XLIII. SANCTIFIED BY FAITH IN CHRIST**

Jesus says people receive:

An inheritance among those sanctified:

By faith in Me.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Salvation and belonging to God's people are grounded in faith in Christ.

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## **XLIV. OBEDIENCE TO THE HEAVENLY VISION**

Paul says:

"I was not disobedient."

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

**"A Testimony Becomes Credible When the Life After the Encounter Matches the Claim About the Encounter."**

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## **XLV. REPENTANCE PRODUCES FRUIT**

Paul preached that people should:

Repent.

Turn.

Demonstrate repentance.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Saving repentance is inward, but its effects should eventually become outwardly visible.

---

## **XLVI. GOD HELPED PAUL**

Acts 26:22 may summarize Paul's entire ministry:

"God has helped me."

### **Through:**

Danger.

Beatings.

Prisons.

Plots.

Trials.

Ship journeys.

Accusations.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

**"Your Survival Is Not Always Evidence of Your Strength;  
Sometimes It Is Evidence of God's Help."**

---

## **XLVII. SMALL AND GREAT ALIKE**

Paul says he witnesses to:

Small.

Great.

### **Spiritual Principle**

The gospel does not change according to the social status of the audience.

---

## **XLVIII. MOSES AND THE PROPHETS POINT TO CHRIST**

Paul says:

His message is nothing beyond what Scripture predicted.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

A faithful gospel message is rooted in the whole biblical story.

---

## **XLIX. THE SUFFERING MESSIAH**

Paul preached:

The Christ must suffer.

### **Spiritual Principle**

The cross was not an interruption of God's plan; it was part of God's plan.

---

## **L. THE RISEN MESSIAH**

The Messiah would rise.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

The resurrection is God's declaration that death did not defeat Jesus.

---

## **LI. LIGHT TO JEWS AND GENTILES**

The gospel reaches:

Israel.

Nations.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Christ is not a tribal Savior; He is proclaimed to the world.

---

## **LII. FESTUS THINKS PAUL IS CRAZY**

Paul speaks of:

Resurrection.

Vision.

Prophecy.

Mission.

Festus says:

Madness.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Unbelief may label as irrational what it has already decided the supernatural cannot be.

---

## **LIII. TRUE AND REASONABLE**

Paul says:

“What I am saying is true and reasonable.”

### **Spiritual Principle**

Christian faith involves supernatural claims, but it is not presented as irrational nonsense.

---

## **LIV. CHRISTIANITY WAS NOT DONE IN A CORNER**

The events surrounding Jesus were public.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Christian faith invites historical consideration because its central claims concern events presented as occurring in public history.

---

## **LV. PAUL PUTS AGRIPPA ON THE SPOT**

“Do you believe the prophets?”

Now:

Agrippa must respond.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Eventually every theological discussion becomes personal.

---

## **LVI. ALMOST PERSUADED**

Agrippa stands dangerously close.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

**“Nearness to Faith Is Not the Same as Faith.”**

A person can:

Understand.

Agree partially.

Feel moved.

Be impressed.

And remain:

Unconverted.

---

## **LVII. FELIX AND AGRIPPA — TWO WARNINGS**

Felix:

“When I find it convenient.”

Agrippa:

“Almost persuade me.”

### **Spiritual Principle**

One delayed; the other nearly responded. Neither statement records surrender.

---

## **LVIII. PAUL’S HEART FOR LOST PEOPLE**

Paul wants:

Everyone listening.

To become:

A Christian.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

True evangelism does not merely win arguments; it longs for people to be saved.

---

## **LIX. THE CHAINS DO NOT DEFINE PAUL**

Paul says:

Become as I am:

Except for these chains.

What does Paul possess?

Faith.

Forgiveness.

Hope.

Christ.

Calling.

### **Spiritual Principle**

A believer in chains may possess greater freedom than an unbelieving king on a throne.

---

## **LX. THE REAL PRISONERS IN THE ROOM**

Paul is physically bound.

But:

Festus is bound by unbelief.

Agrippa may be bound by hesitation.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

**“Physical Chains Are Visible; Spiritual Chains Are Often Harder to See.”**

---

## **LXI. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM ACTS 26**

### **1. Share Your Testimony Clearly**

#### **Principle:**

Tell who you were, how Christ confronted you, and what He changed.

---

### **2. Resurrection Is Central**

#### **Principle:**

Do not treat the resurrection as a secondary Christian belief.

---

### **3. No Enemy Is Beyond Grace**

#### **Principle:**

Paul the persecutor became Paul the apostle.

---

### **4. Conversion Produces Mission**

#### **Principle:**

Jesus saved Paul and sent Paul.

---

### **5. Repentance Should Produce Fruit**

#### **Principle:**

Changed allegiance should eventually produce changed conduct.

---

### **6. The Gospel Demands a Response**

#### **Principle:**

“Almost persuaded” is not enough.

---

### **7. Witness Faithfully Everywhere**

#### **Principle:**

Paul preached to small and great alike.

---

## **LXII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY**

### **Question 1**

Why was Paul glad to speak before Agrippa?

Agrippa understood Jewish customs and controversies, giving Paul an opportunity to explain clearly that the gospel fulfilled Israel’s biblical hope.

---

## Question 2

What was Paul's religious background?

He had lived as a Pharisee according to one of the strictest expressions of Jewish religion.

---

## Question 3

What did Paul say was the real reason for his trial?

He said he was on trial because of hope in God's promise, especially resurrection.

---

## Question 4

What had Paul done before becoming a Christian?

He fiercely opposed Jesus, imprisoned believers, approved their deaths, tried to force them to blaspheme, and pursued them into foreign cities.

---

## Question 5

What happened on the road to Damascus?

A heavenly light brighter than the sun surrounded Paul, and the risen Jesus confronted him personally.

---

## Question 6

What did Jesus call Paul to become?

A servant and witness.

---

## Question 7

What mission did Jesus give Paul?

He was sent to open spiritually blind eyes, turn people from darkness to light and from Satan's power to God, so they could receive forgiveness and an inheritance through faith in Christ.

---

## Question 8

How did Paul respond to Christ's call?

He said:

“I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.”

He began preaching Christ.

---

## **Question 9**

What did Paul preach people should do?

Repent.

Turn to God.

And demonstrate genuine repentance through changed lives.

---

## **Question 10**

How did Festus respond to Paul’s message?

Festus accused Paul of being insane.

Paul calmly answered that his words were true and reasonable.

---

## **Question 11**

What did Agrippa say?

He said:

“You almost persuade me to become a Christian.”

---

## **Question 12**

What did Paul desire for Agrippa and everyone listening?

Paul prayed that all of them would become believers like himself, except without his chains.

---

# **LXIII. PERSONAL APPLICATION**

Acts 26 asks us serious questions.

**Can I clearly tell what Christ has done in my life?**

Paul could.

**Am I trusting religion instead of Christ?**

Paul once did.

**Do I believe God can raise the dead?**

Paul did.

**Have I honestly faced my past?**

Paul did.

**Do I believe Christ can save a hostile sinner?**

Paul is proof.

**Am I resisting God's conviction?**

Saul once fought against the goads.

**Have I moved from darkness to light?**

That is the gospel's transforming call.

**Have I genuinely repented?**

Paul preached repentance.

**Does my life demonstrate fruit consistent with repentance?**

It should.

**Can I say:**

"I was not disobedient"?

**Am I merely almost persuaded?**

Agrippa's words are a warning.

**Do I desire the salvation of others more than winning arguments?**

Paul did.

---

## **LXIV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE**

**"Do Not Be Satisfied With Almost"**

Agrippa says:

"Almost."

**Almost Repenting**

Still unrepentant.

### **Almost Believing**

Still unbelieving.

### **Almost Surrendered**

Still unsurrendered.

### **Principle**

The gospel calls for faith, not nearness to faith.

---

## **LXV. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE**

### **“Your Past Does Not Have the Final Word”**

Paul’s past included:

Violence.

Hatred.

Persecution.

Approval of death.

Yet:

Jesus changed him.

### **Principle**

Christ’s grace can write a new future without pretending the old past never happened.

---

## **LXVI. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE**

### **“Obedience Is the Proper Response to Revelation”**

Paul did not merely tell people:

I saw something amazing.

He said:

“I was not disobedient.”

## **Principle**

Spiritual experiences should produce faithful obedience rather than spiritual pride.

---

# **LXVII. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE**

## **“God’s Help Explains Why You Are Still Standing”**

Paul says:

“God has helped me to this very day.”

## **Principle**

Never confuse divine preservation with personal invincibility.

---

# **LXVIII. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE**

## **“The Gospel Moves People From One Kingdom to Another”**

From:

Darkness.

To:

Light.

From:

Satan.

To:

God.

From:

Guilt.

To:

Forgiveness.

From:

Exclusion.

To:

Inheritance.

### **Principle**

Salvation is a complete change of spiritual position through faith in Jesus Christ.

---

## **LXIX. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE**

### **“The Gospel Should Reach the King and the Common Man”**

Paul says:

“Small and great alike.”

### **Principle**

No one is too important to need Jesus and no one is too insignificant to hear about Him.

---

## **LXX. FINAL APPLICATION**

Acts Chapter 26 gives us one of the clearest pictures of Christian testimony in Scripture.

Paul stands before:

A king.

A governor.

Royal guests.

Military officers.

Prominent citizens.

He could have focused only on:

His innocence.

His legal defense.

His desire for freedom.

Instead:

He talks about:

Jesus.

That is the heart of the chapter.

Paul tells them:

I was religious.

But wrong.

I was sincere.

But blind.

I was zealous.

But fighting against God.

Then:

Jesus appeared.

Paul's testimony is therefore not:

I discovered a better philosophy.

It is:

The risen Jesus confronted me.

That encounter changes everything.

The persecutor becomes:

A servant.

The enemy becomes:

A witness.

The destroyer becomes:

A preacher.

Then Jesus explains the gospel mission.

Eyes must be opened.

People must turn:

From darkness to light.

From Satan to God.

Why?

So they may receive:

Forgiveness.

And:

An inheritance.

How?

By faith in Christ.

Then Paul says:

“I was not disobedient.”

That may be one of the most important statements in the entire chapter.

Many people want:

Calling.

Vision.

Purpose.

Direction.

But:

The real question is obedience.

Has God shown you truth?

Obey.

Has Christ called you?

Follow.

Has Scripture spoken?

Respond.

Paul then preaches:

Repentance.

Turning to God.

Fruit that demonstrates repentance.

Genuine Christianity is not:

Words without life.

Profession without transformation.

Emotion without obedience.

Then:

Festus calls Paul crazy.

Paul remains calm.

He says:

“I am not insane.”

Truth does not require panic.

Then Paul turns directly to Agrippa.

“Do you believe the prophets?”

Agrippa now must face the message personally.

He says:

“You almost persuade me.”

Almost.

That word should disturb every person who has heard the gospel repeatedly but has never surrendered to Christ.

Almost is not enough.

Felix said:

Later.

Agrippa says:

Almost.

The gospel says:

Believe.

Repent.

Come to Christ.

Paul’s response is beautiful.

He does not become offended by Agrippa.

He says:

I pray:

You.

And everyone listening.

Will become like me:

Except for the chains.

Paul sees himself as blessed despite imprisonment.

Why?

He has:

Christ.

Forgiveness.

Hope.

Purpose.

Eternal life.

That is freedom.

The rulers eventually leave the room.

They conclude:

Paul is innocent.

But the greater question remains:

What will they do with:

Jesus?

That is ultimately the question Acts 26 places before every reader.

Not merely:

What do you think about Paul?

But:

What will you do with Jesus Christ?

Will you:

Reject Him?

Delay?

Almost believe?

Or:

Repent.

Turn to God.

Believe.

Obey.

And follow?

---

# Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Acts Chapter 26.

Thank You for the testimony of Paul.

Thank You that Your grace can reach even determined enemies.

Help us never write anyone off as beyond salvation.

Thank You that Jesus is alive.

Thank You that resurrection is real.

Thank You that death does not have the final word.

Open blinded eyes.

Turn hearts:

From darkness to light.

From Satan's power to You.

Bring forgiveness of sins.

Bring people into the inheritance You give through faith in Christ.

Help us examine our own obedience.

May we be able to say:

"I was not disobedient."

Give us courage to repent.

Give us courage to turn fully toward You.

Give us lives that demonstrate genuine repentance.

When people misunderstand us:

Help us remain calm.

When they ridicule our faith:

Help us answer with truth and reason.

Give us courage to speak to:

Small and great alike.

Help us never become impressed by earthly titles.

Kings need Jesus.

Governors need Jesus.

Workers need Jesus.

Families need Jesus.

Everyone needs Jesus.

Protect us from becoming:

Almost persuaded.

Keep us from postponing surrender.

Help us respond fully to Christ.

Thank You for every day You have helped us.

When we look back over trials, dangers, failures, hardships, and opposition:

Help us say:

“God has helped me to this very day.”

Let our testimony always make:

Jesus the center.

Jesus the Savior.

Jesus the risen Lord.

Jesus the One who changes lives.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

---

## Key Verse

“So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.” — Acts 26:19

## Central Truth

The risen Jesus Christ transforms enemies into servants, sends His people to turn others from darkness to light and from Satan’s power to God, grants forgiveness and inheritance through faith, calls for repentance that produces visible fruit, and demands more than being almost persuaded—He calls for obedient faith.

## Acts 26 in One Sentence

Paul stands before King Agrippa and boldly recounts his former persecution of Christians, his encounter with the risen Jesus, his commission to turn people from darkness to light, his obedience in

preaching repentance and resurrection, and his desire that Agrippa and everyone listening move beyond being almost persuaded and become genuine followers of Jesus Christ.