



# **Almost Persuaded**

Acts 26:1-32

# Paul faces Royalty

- **25:23-24** So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in. <sup>24</sup> And Festus said: "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer.

## Festus admits Paul's innocence

- **25:25-27** But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him. <sup>26</sup> I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write. <sup>27</sup> For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him.”

# Paul's respectful beginning

- 26:1-3 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..

## Paul's life: I was a devout Jew

- 26:4-5 “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.
- 6-8 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?

# Paul's life: my attitude to Christ

- 26:9-11“Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things [a]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.

## Paul's life: I saw a light

- 26:12-15 “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.

## Paul's life: I heard a voice

- 26:16-18 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<sup>[d]</sup> by faith in Me.'

## Paul's life: I was not disobedient

- 26:19-21 “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*.
- 22-23 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.”

## The Response of Felix

**26:24-26** Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!”

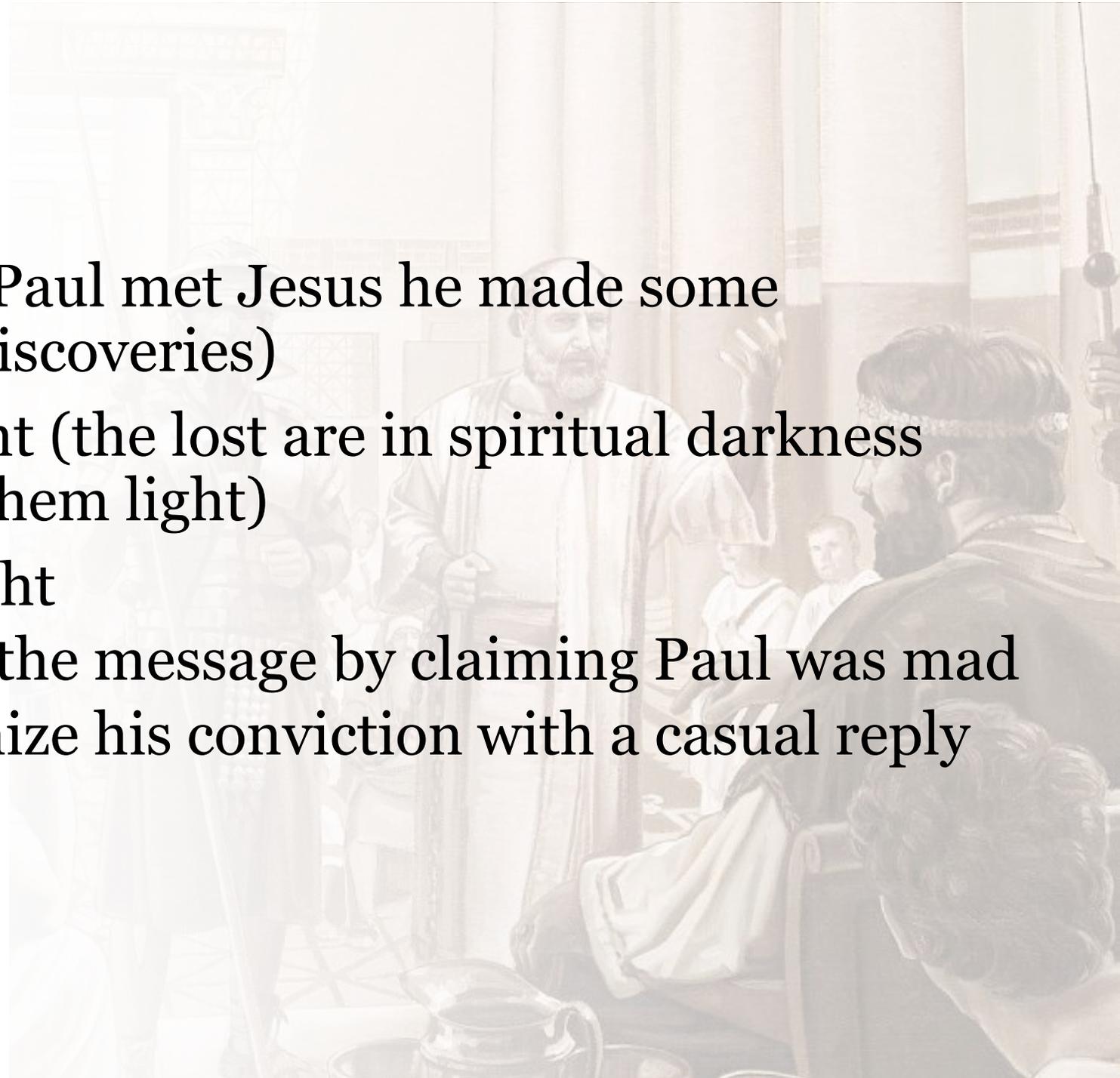
<sup>25</sup> But he said, “I am not [e]mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. <sup>26</sup> For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. <sup>27</sup> King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.”

# The Response of Agrippa

- 26:28-29 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.”
- 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.”

# What we learn

- Paul saw the light (when Paul met Jesus he made some important life changing discoveries)
- The Gentiles need the light (the lost are in spiritual darkness and only Christ can give them light)
- The rulers rejected the light
  - Felix tried to discredit the message by claiming Paul was mad
  - Agrippa tried to minimize his conviction with a casual reply





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