

Acts 25:25-27 - Festus wanted King Agrippa II to hear Paul's case to help him prepare a letter to Caesar.

Paul finally has a knowledgeable judge, who is not inherently antagonistic, before whom he could not only make his defense but also proclaim his message.

Compare to...
Acts 9:1-19 & 22:2-21

¹So **Agrippa** said to **Paul**, "You have permission to speak for yourself." Then **Paul** stretched out his hand and **made his defense**:

²"I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, **King Agrippa**, I am **going to make my defense today** against all the accusations of the **Jews**,

³especially because **you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews**. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

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.

⁵They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that **according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee**.

⁶And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers,

⁷to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king!

⁸Why is it thought incredible by any of you that **God raises the dead?** <- Acts 23:6; 24:21

⁹"I myself **was convinced** that I ought to do many things in **opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth**.

¹⁰And **I did so in Jerusalem**. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death **I cast my vote against them**.

¹¹And **I punished them** often in all the synagogues and **tried to make them blaspheme**, and in **raging fury** against them **I persecuted them even to foreign cities**.

¹²"In this connection **I journeyed to Damascus** with the authority and commission of the chief priests.

¹³**At midday**, O king, **I saw on the way a light** from heaven, **brighter than the sun**, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me.

¹⁴And when we had all fallen to the ground, **I heard a voice saying** to me in the **Hebrew language**, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' <- In Greek world, this was a common expression for opposition to a deity

¹⁵And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the **Lord** said, 'I am **Jesus whom you are persecuting**.'

Since Festus had already said that Paul had not committed a capital crime (25:25), Paul chose to defend himself only against the charge that he had transgressed against Judaism.

"strictest party..." (5)

*Phil 3:4-6

-Physical circumcision (Gen 17:12)

-Tribe of Benjamin (Acts 13:21; Rom 11:1)

-Hebrew of Hebrews

-Pharisee (Acts 22:3)

-Persecutor (Acts 9:13,21)

-Blameless

"strictest party..."

Acts 22:2-3

2Co 11:22

Gal 1:14

"I punished them"

Acts 9:1-2

22:4-5

(8:1-3)

<- Acts 8:1 "approved"

"At midday" (13)

-Luke did not mention this detail in ch. 9

-"about noon" ch. 12

-Paul points it out to show that the light from heaven was incredibly brilliant.

-The glory of God shines brighter than the sun

-Isa 24:23

"brighter...sun"

Acts 9:3-5

22:6-9

"Hebrew language" (14)

-Not mentioned in chapters 9 or 22

-Lit. Hebrew dialect (i.e. Aramaic)

"rise and stand"

Acts 9:6-8
22:10-11

¹⁶But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you,
¹⁷delivering you from your people and from the **Gentiles—to whom I am sending you** <- Acts 9:15; Gal 2:7-8; Eph 3:6-12
¹⁸to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

"declared first"

Acts 9:20-30
Gal 1:11-24

¹⁹“Therefore, O King **Agrippa**, *I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,*
²⁰but **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.

²¹*For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.* <- Acts 21:27-28

²²To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, **saying nothing but what the prophets** and Moses said would come to pass:

²³that the **Christ must suffer** and that, by being the **first to rise from the dead**, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.” <- Isa 53:1-12; Ps 22:1-22; 118:22

²⁴And as he was saying these things in his defense, **Festus** said with a loud voice, “**Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.**”

²⁵But **Paul** said, “**I am not out of my mind**, most excellent **Festus**, but I am speaking **true and rational** words.

²⁶For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this **has not been done in a corner.** <- Another Greek idiom

²⁷**King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.**”

²⁸And **Agrippa** said to **Paul**, “**In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?**”

²⁹And **Paul** said, “Whether **short** or long, 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.”

³⁰Then the king rose, and the governor and **Bernice** and those who were sitting with them.

³¹And when they had withdrawn, they said to one another, “**This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment.**”

³²And **Agrippa** said to **Festus**, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to **Caesar.**”

<- Jesus was the first to permanently rise from the dead

-Acts 2:24

-1Co 15:20

All previous had been temporary.

-Mark 5:42

-Luke 7:11-17

-John 11:43-44

"out of your mind"

-Festus likely thought it ridiculous that a man could be raised from the dead.

"persuade me"

-“Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” (KJV) - poor translation of original text.

-Agrippa is likely embarrassed by the direct question.

-“short” ὀλίγος (oligos): often has reference to quantity

Could mean:

“with such few words”

“with such a brief argument.”

“in such a short time”

Parallel Passages

Acts 9:1–30 (ESV)

¹ But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. ⁴ And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” ⁵ And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶ But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” ⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸ Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” ¹¹ And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” ¹³ But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” ¹⁷ So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; ¹⁹ and taking food, he was strengthened.

For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. ²⁰ And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” ²¹ And all who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?” ²² But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

²³ When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, ²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, ²⁵ but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

²⁶ And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹ And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him. ³⁰ And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

Acts 22:1–21 (ESV)

¹ “Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you.”

² And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said:

³ “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. ⁴ I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, ⁵ as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

⁶ “As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. ⁷ And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ ⁸ And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ ⁹ Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. ¹⁰ And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.’ ¹¹ And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.

¹² “And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, ¹³ came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. ¹⁴ And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; ¹⁵ for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’

¹⁷ “When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance ¹⁸ and saw him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ ¹⁹ And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. ²⁰ And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.’ ²¹ And he said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’ ”

Festus / Agrippa

Acts 25:25–27 (ESV)

²⁵ But I found that he had done nothing deserving death. And as he himself appealed to the emperor, I decided to go ahead and send him. ²⁶ But I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore I have brought him before you all, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write. ²⁷ For it seems to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not to indicate the charges against him.”

Strictest Party

2 Corinthians 11:22 (ESV)

²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I.

Galatians 1:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.

Philippians 3:4–6 (ESV)

⁴ though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Genesis 17:12 (ESV)

¹² He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring,

Acts 13:21 (ESV)

²¹ Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

Romans 11:1 (ESV)

¹ I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

God Raises the Dead

Acts 23:6 (ESV)

⁶ Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.”

Acts 24:21 (ESV)

²¹ other than this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: ‘It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.’ ”

I Punished Them

Acts 8:1–3 (ESV)

¹ And Saul approved of his execution.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ² Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. ³ But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

At Midday

Isaiah 24:23 (ESV)

²³ Then the moon will be confounded
and the sun ashamed,
for the LORD of hosts reigns
on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,
and his glory will be before his elders.

To the Gentiles

Acts 9:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

Galatians 2:7–8 (ESV)

⁷ On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised ⁸ (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles),

Ephesians 3:6–12 (ESV)

⁶ This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷ Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power. ⁸ To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, ¹⁰ so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

Declared First

Galatians 1:11–24 (ESV)

¹¹ For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. ¹² For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹³ For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴ And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵ But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, ¹⁶ was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; ¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

¹⁸ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. ²⁰ (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) ²¹ Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. ²² And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. ²³ They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." ²⁴ And they glorified God because of me.

Seized in the Temple

Acts 21:27–28 (ESV)

²⁷ When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, ²⁸ crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place."

Christ Must Suffer

Isaiah 53:1–12 (ESV)

¹ Who has believed what he has heard from us?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

² For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.

³ He was despised and rejected by men;
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,

and with his wounds we are healed.
⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?

⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Psalm 22:1–22 (ESV)

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

² O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.

³ Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.

⁴ In you our fathers trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.

⁵ To you they cried and were rescued;

in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

⁶ But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.

⁷ All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;

⁸ “He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”

⁹ Yet you are he who took me from the womb;
you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts.

¹⁰ On you was I cast from my birth,
and from my mother’s womb you have been my God.

¹¹ Be not far from me,
for trouble is near,
and there is none to help.

¹² Many bulls encompass me;
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;

¹³ they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.

¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;

¹⁵ my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

¹⁶ For dogs encompass me;
a company of evildoers encircles me;
they have pierced my hands and feet—

¹⁷ I can count all my bones—
they stare and gloat over me;

¹⁸ they divide my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.

¹⁹ But you, O LORD, do not be far off!
O you my help, come quickly to my aid!

²⁰ Deliver my soul from the sword,
my precious life from the power of the dog!

²¹ Save me from the mouth of the lion!
You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!

²² I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:

Psalm 118:22 (ESV)

²² The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.

First to Rise

Acts 2:24 (ESV)

²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

1 Corinthians 15:20 (ESV)

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Mark 5:42 (ESV)

⁴² And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement.

Luke 7:11–17 (ESV)

¹¹ Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. ¹² As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. ¹³ And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, **“Do not weep.”** ¹⁴ Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, **“Young man, I say to you, arise.”** ¹⁵ And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. ¹⁶ Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has arisen among us!” and “God has visited his people!” ¹⁷ And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

John 11:43–44 (ESV)

⁴³ When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, **“Lazarus, come out.”** ⁴⁴ The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, **“Unbind him, and let him go.”**

Short

3900 ὀλίγος (*oligos*), η (*ē*), ον (*on*): adj.; ≡ DBLHebr 5071; Str 3641; TDNT 5.171—**1.** LN 59.3 **few**, in any dimension (Mt 9:37; Heb 12:10; Mt 20:16 v.r.); **2.** LN 78.8 **slight**, to a small degree (Lk 7:47); **3.** LN 59.13 **little**, small amount or quantity (Lk 5:3; 1Ti 5:23; Rev 12:12); **4.** LN 67.106 **in a short time** (Ac 26:28, 29; Eph 3:3; 1Pe 5:12); **5.** LN 22.41 ἐν ὀλίγῳ (*en oligō*), easily (Ac 26:28+), for another interp, see prior; **6.** LN 67.106 πρὸς ὀλίγον (*pros oligon*), for a short time (Jas 4:14+)¹

¹ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.