

## Intro

**Subject: Paul’s life before Christ [Paul’s defense before Agrippa]**

**Object: Receive and share Christ**

**Context:** Paul’s trial before King Agrippa and Governor Festus. **In his defense** Paul shares His story. Every testimony has 3 key elements: what it used to be like (today), how you received Christ (next week), and how your life and mission has been changed in Christ (in two weeks)

### **A. An opportunity to share your story (testimony) [1-3]**

**1. Permission to speak [1] Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You are permitted to speak for yourself.” So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself:**

Imagine the sound of iron **chains** against the marble stone (29) & acoustics of theatre

a. Look for an opportunity – an open door – to share your story

**2. Place of connection [2] 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, 3especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews:**

happy to share his defense & story

a. v.3 **Agrippa** was a ½ Jew and knew about the Scriptures and Jewish traditions

b. look for something in common, a place to connect, a nexus

**Ac.17** commends the Athenians’ spirituality, quotes their poets

**3. Patient listening [3] Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently: note:** If you listen patiently to their story you will have earned the right to ask them to do the same

### **B. Discovering spiritual need [4-11]**

**1. Reality of God [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. 5They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee:**

Paul understood from his youth that a personal God exists. And Paul tried to please God according the strictest group the **Pharisees** who sought to fully obey God and separate from sin

a. the intelligent design of creation, the existence of morality point to God

i. **C. S. Lewis** “If nothing in this world can satisfy it is reasonable to assume there must be something beyond this world.

#### **2. Restoration of God [6-8]**

**a. The hope of a redeemer [6-7] And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. 7To 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: hope 3x, **Promise** refers to the promise of Messiah who would restore the consequences of man’s rebellion vs. God [Gen. 3:15]**

i. Every culture has an awareness that there is something “wrong” with this world and a yearning for it to be made “right” – the hope of restoration

**b. The hope of a resurrection [8] Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?** Greeks & Romans don’t believe in a resurrection, but Jews do and Agrippa is par Jewish

i. If God is able to create the universe then the resurrection is not too difficult

ii. There is something uniquely attractive about the idea of eternity in the presence of a loving God in a place with no fear, sorrow, death, pain, heartache

### **3. Righteousness of God (is not attained by the works of man) [9-11]**

**9**“Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. **10**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*.**11**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.

**a. You need to realize that you are spiritually bankrupt apart from Christ**

**Matt. 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven**

i. *Apart from Christ & the Holy Spirit you can do no spiritual good (cf. improper motive)*

ii. cf. most folks believe they are spiritually “middle class” (ie. good works > bad)

iii. “poor in Spirit” is the humble realization that you can’t be made right with God by your efforts/works and thus need a Savior – Jesus. Receive Christ, the Holy Spirit, Salvation, and heaven by grace through faith in Christ (submit) **[Eph. 2:8-9]**

### **Discussion Qs**

**1. When did you first become aware the reality of God? How old were you and what did you think about God?**

**2. In what ways do you think there is something wrong with this world?**

**3. Why is the hope of a resurrection attractive to you?**

**4. Practice sharing your story. Try to create time in your community group for people to share their story.**

**5. Pray for God to open a door for you to share your story with an unbeliever or unchurched person.**

### **2015 Vision**

**intro.** Every follower of Christ has discovered the reality of God, the restoration of God, & the righteousness of God. Would you like to discover how to help others to know they cannot be made right with God by their efforts, and thus need a Savior?