

## "On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan

## ACTS 26

### Acts 26

The term "Herod" in the New Testament references a "Family name" like Smith, Jones or Crisp. The King [Herod] Agrippa, who appears in Acts 26, was the great-grandson of Herod the Great, who built the city of Caesarea by the Sea. Herod the Great is the one who sought to kill Jesus the Messiah and did succeed in killing all the babies in the environs of Bethlehem, as recorded in the book of Matthew. This Herod of Acts, Herod Agrippa II, was the son of Herod Agrippa I of Acts 12, who killed James, the brother of John. Later in Acts 12, Herod Agrippa I was killed by "the angel of the Lord" in this same Caesarea after taking glory that belongs only to God. Herod Agrippa I was the nephew of Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist. In Acts 26, Agrippa II was the seventh and last king of the family of Herod the Great or the Herodians. The reason for this explanation is that several of the Herod family are mentioned in the New Testament, and it can become very confusing.

The new Roman governor of the Judean province, Porcius Festus, was not familiar at all with the customs and sects of Judaism and wanted to get off to a good start with the Jews and fellow dignitaries and rulers of the area. Agrippa II came to bring greetings to the new governor and to ingratiate himself to him should the need arise for help from him. Festus wanted a more

seasoned person in Jewish affairs to hear this most important case and help him make a ruling on it without delay. So, on a given day, the Apostle Paul came before the rulers and began to make his case. The defense, or apology, that Paul gave before these dignitaries is a pattern worthy of following by those who will give their case before earthly potentates. Paul begins by addressing his hosts with dignity and respect. Paul knew his audience. He said to Agrippa,

***"In regard to all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that I am about to make my defense before you today; especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among the Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently."*** (Acts 26:2-3)

Then Paul shared his personal experience with Jesus of Nazareth and his witnessing that this Galilean had proven to be the one promised to the fathers, the anointed one (Messiah) that would redeem and restore Israel. This Jesus had been crucified, and hundreds had given witness of seeing Him alive. Still, Paul, then Saul of Tarsus, would have none of it until he met Jesus personally just outside the city of Damascus, and his life was changed forever. Paul continued until Agrippa admitted, ***"If you keep this up, you will persuade me to be a Christian."*** (Acts 26:28).

### Prayer and Action Steps

*The Apostle Paul gave all who would follow Jesus a template of how to effectively witness to those who are unbelievers. Paul knew his responsibility was to tell the story; it was God's business to change the heart. The "Successful Witness" is the person who shares the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaves the results of that witness to God. God is the heart changer, not us!*