

## Acts 25:13-26:32 Bible Study

1. Have you ever had someone ask you a question about your faith and felt self-conscious about answering them because other people were listening in?

*Eg at the hairdressers / barbers, coffee break at work, watching sport etc*

2. Read Acts 25:13-27. Summarise the key points regarding Paul's case.

*Left prisoner by previous governor; Jews wanted him executed; Jews had a dispute with Paul over their religion; Paul claimed Jesus was alive; did not present as case worthy of criminal investigation; Paul had done nothing worthy of death; Paul had appealed his case to be heard by the Emperor.*

3. Having already spent two years in prison, how might you expect Paul (or anyone) to defend themselves in this situation?

*Probably majoring on the injustice, personal expense, his indignation (and anger), a demand for immediate release, etc.*

4. Read Acts 26:1-3. Read back over Acts 23:1-5, 24:10, 25:10-11. What example does Paul set for Christians? Perhaps read also Rom 13:1-7.

*Submission to the ruling authorities. It is important for us to remember that Paul practiced this before corrupt and self motivated leaders. So consider this next time we feel inclined to complain about our leaders or wish we had someone else!*

5. Read Acts 26:4-8. How accurate was Festus' summary in 25:19? What is Paul trying to say about Judaism here?

*Festus made a pretty good summary – Paul's point is that Christianity is the fulfilment of Judaism, not a sect or spin-off from it. The raising of Jesus from the dead is the proof – this is what the Jews have been hoping for.*

6. Considering the discussion of Q5, what attitude should we have to the Old Testament?

*Perhaps you could ask people how familiar they are with the Old Testament. If they don't know it too well, is this because they have not been a Christian for long, or because they have not thought it important to spend the time and energy to explore properly?*

7. Read Acts 26:9-18. How does Paul's experience explain why the Jewish authorities would want him dead?

*He was what they still are. His life and message claim that they are in darkness and under Satan's power, and that they need forgiveness in order to become one of God's holy people. The Jesus they are rejecting is "the Lord" (v15). This denied them their exclusive place in God's kingdom and actually put them outside!*

8. Read Acts 26:19-32. How concerned does Paul seem to be to defend **himself** or have himself set free? What is Paul doing in his speech?

*He is testifying to the king and "all who are listening" (Look back to the list of who is listening in 25:23) that they must repent and turn to Christ. He has a captive audience and so puts **them** in the witness box and calls them to account!*

9. Think about v29. How can we train ourselves to think more like this? ie That sharing our faith is about others becoming Christians – it is not just a duty, an obligation, an option or even just an end in itself. Pray for such a heart, think of specific opportunities that might come up this week. Continue to pray for the three names on the prayer cards.