

Acts 26:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:

Analysis

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself (ἐπιτρέπεται σοι)—The verb epitrepō means 'to allow, give permission,' a formal legal term granting Paul the floor. King Agrippa II, ruling tetrarch and expert in Jewish customs (v. 3), presides as judge. **Then Paul stretched forth the hand** (ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα)—the classical rhetorical gesture (chironomia) of an orator beginning his defense, signaling both respect and confidence.

Answered for himself (ἀπελογεῖτο)—apologeomai, from which we get 'apologetics,' means to make a formal legal defense. This is Paul's third and final defense speech in Acts (22:1-21, 24:10-21, 26:2-29), his most polished oration. Before kings and governors, Christ's promise is fulfilled: 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom' (Luke 21:15). Paul's defense becomes gospel proclamation—the prisoner evangelizes his judge.

Historical Context

Paul stands before Herod Agrippa II (AD 27-92/93), great-grandson of Herod the Great, and his sister Bernice (around AD 59-60). Festus, the Roman procurator, arranged this hearing to formulate charges for Caesar. Agrippa held no jurisdiction but possessed expertise in Jewish law—making him the ideal audience for Paul's testimony about Pharisaic resurrection hope and Christ's fulfillment of Messianic prophecy.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. When given opportunity to defend yourself, do you use it merely for self-justification, or like Paul, to bear witness to Christ?
2. How does Paul's rhetorical eloquence demonstrate that the gospel doesn't despise cultural excellence but redeems and employs it for God's glory?

Interlinear Text

Ἄγριππας δὲ πρὸς τὸν Παῦλος ἔφη Ἐπιτρέπεται σοι
Agrippa Then unto G3588 Paul said art permitted Thou
G67 G1161 G4314 G3972 G5346 G2010 G4671

ὑπὲρ σεαυτοῦ λέγειν τότε ὁ Παῦλος ἀπελογεῖτο
for thyself to speak Then G3588 Paul and answered for himself
G5228 G4572 G3004 G5119 G3972 G626

ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα
stretched forth G3588 the hand
G1614 G5495

Additional Cross-References

Acts 9:15 (Parallel theme): But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

Acts 26:2 (Parallel theme): I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

Proverbs 1:24 (Parallel theme): Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

John 7:51 (Parallel theme): Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?