

Acts 26:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

Analysis

King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

Paul's direct appeal to King Agrippa demonstrates masterful apologetic strategy. The Greek construction reveals Paul's boldness: *pisteueis tois prophētais* (πιστεύεις τοῖς προφήταις) is a direct question demanding personal response. Paul doesn't ask whether Agrippa knows about the prophets but whether he personally trusts their message.

The phrase "I know that thou believest" (*oida hoti pisteueis, οἶδα ὅτι πιστεύεις*) shows Paul's confidence in Agrippa's familiarity with Jewish Scripture. As a Herodian ruler educated in Jewish traditions, Agrippa II understood messianic prophecies. Paul's strategy was brilliant: he established common ground (belief in prophets) before pressing toward the logical conclusion (Jesus fulfills prophecy, therefore Agrippa should believe in Jesus).

This verse exemplifies effective evangelism: Paul didn't merely present facts but pressed for personal commitment. He understood that intellectual assent to Scripture's authority must lead to faith in Christ. The uncomfortable directness of Paul's question put Agrippa in a difficult position—to affirm belief in the prophets while rejecting Jesus would be logically inconsistent. This demonstrates that Christian apologetics should aim not just at winning arguments but at calling people to saving faith.

Historical Context

This scene occurred around 59-60 AD in Caesarea, where Paul had been imprisoned for two years after his arrest in Jerusalem. King Agrippa II (Marcus Julius Agrippa) was the great-grandson of Herod the Great and the last of the Herodian dynasty. Though ruling limited territories in northern Palestine and Lebanon, he held significant influence with Rome and authority over the Jerusalem temple and high priestly appointments.

Agrippa II was educated in Rome and maintained close ties to the imperial family. He lived incestuously with his sister Bernice (mentioned in Acts 25:13), which was scandalous even by Roman standards. Despite his Jewish heritage and religious responsibilities, Agrippa balanced Roman political loyalty with Jewish religious traditions—a precarious position that required careful navigation.

Paul's hearing before Agrippa was technically a courtesy, as Festus the Roman governor sought Agrippa's expertise to formulate charges for Paul's appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:26-27). The setting was formal and public, with "great pomp" (Acts 25:23), military tribunes, and prominent city leaders present. Paul's boldness in pressing Agrippa for personal faith commitment in this politically charged context demonstrates remarkable courage and evangelistic zeal.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's direct approach to Agrippa inform how we should present Christ to those familiar with Scripture?
2. What is the relationship between believing the Bible and believing in Jesus, and how can we articulate this connection?

3. How can we balance respect for authorities with the boldness to challenge them spiritually, as Paul did with Agrippa?
4. What prevents people who intellectually accept biblical authority from personally trusting Christ as Savior?
5. How should we respond when our evangelistic efforts create social or political discomfort, as Paul's question did for Agrippa?

Interlinear Text

πιστεύεις	βασιλεῦ	Ἀγρίππα	τοῖς	προφήταις	οἶδα	ὅτι
believest thou	King	Agrippa	G3588	the prophets	I know	that
G4100	G935	G67		G4396	G1492	G3754

πιστεύεις
believest thou
 G4100