

## Approaching God

Read this portion of Psalm 50 and respond to God with an opening prayer

*The Mighty One, God, the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to where it sets. From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth. Our God comes and will not be silent; a fire devours before him, and around him a tempest rages. He summons the heavens above, and the earth, that he may judge his people: "Gather to me this consecrated people, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice." (Psalm 50:1-5)*

Psalm 50 opens with God gathering everyone before him in a great judgment scene. It is an awesome sight. Take a moment to reflect on the reality that we do not live to ourselves - everything we do is in relation to the God who made us and cares for us. Ask God to help you mature in Christlikeness today.

## Acts 25:13-27

**Passage Introduction: Paul Before the Governor & King**

The second part of Acts 25 introduces a lengthy section of narrative in which Paul gives his testimony before King Agrippa. Much as in the first part, Luke does not mention God in these verses. Despite this omission, Luke clues the reader in on a conversation between two secular rulers in which the providence of God can clearly be seen. God has worked Paul's situation perfectly. Paul's lifetime of faithfulness and God's gracious hand have brought Paul to a crucial moment in his ministry: he will proclaim the gospel before a king.

## Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

**Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.**

### Notes:

**Acts 25:13-27 - 13** A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus. **14** Since they were spending many days there, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. He said: "There is a man here whom Felix left as a prisoner. **15** When I went to Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews brought charges against him and asked that he be condemned. **16** "I told them that it is not the Roman custom to hand over anyone before they have faced their accusers and have had an opportunity to defend themselves against the charges. **17** When they came here with me, I did not delay the case, but convened the court the next day and ordered the man to be brought in. **18** When his accusers got up to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected. **19** Instead, they had some points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive. **20** I was at a loss how to investigate such matters; so I asked if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial there on these charges. **21** But when Paul

#### v26 - King

##### Agrippa:

We have already met Herod Agrippa I in Acts 12. This is his son Herod Agrippa II, a great-grandson of Herod the Great and popular with both the Romans and the Jews. It is fascinating to see Paul and his beliefs and preaching through the eyes of a Roman official.

made his appeal to be held over for the Emperor's decision, I ordered him held until I could send him to Caesar." **22** Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man myself." He replied, "Tomorrow you will hear him." **23** The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room with the high-ranking military officers and the prominent men of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. **24** Festus said: "King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man! The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. **25** I found he had done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal to the Emperor I decided to send him to Rome. **26** But I have nothing definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may have something to write. **27** For I think it is unreasonable to send a prisoner on to Rome without specifying the charges against him."

## Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- Festus' summary shows how the Christian faith appeared to one pagan outsider. How is Paul's case explained to Agrippa from Festus' point of view?
- How do you think nonbelievers misunderstand your Christian beliefs?
- What are some ways in which you could make it more clear to them. Take a moment and prayerfully jot down some ideas.

## Key Takeaway:

What truth do I most need to remember from today's passage? How would this truth change my life if I took it seriously? If this truth were fully alive and effective in your inward being? Why might God be bringing this truth to your attention today?

## Close in Prayer:

1. **Rejoice:** - What did God show me today that I can **rejoice in**?
2. **Repent:** - What did God reveal that I need to confess or **repent of**?
3. **Requests:** - What prayer **requests** do I have as a result of my time with God today?