

## **The Great Debate: King Agrippa and Governor Festus Meet Paul**

Acts 26 presents a dramatic phase in the ministry of Paul. He is given an opportunity to present his case before the elite in Caesarea, including the Jewish king Agrippa and the Roman governor Festus. In a well prepared speech Paul gives a persuasive presentation of the gospel. In this network session we will analyse Paul's speech and see how he can help us communicate the gospel today.

**Stefan Gustavsson** is a member of the European Leadership Forum Steering Committee and leads the Advanced Apologetics Network. He is director of Credo Academy, a Christian study centre in Stockholm, which focuses on cultural analysis, worldview studies, apologetics and evangelism. Stefan also serves as General Secretary of the Swedish Evangelical Alliance. He is the author of several books on Christian apologetics and the Christian mind, and writes regularly for different Swedish magazines. Stefan is married to Ingrid with three grown children.

### **Introduction: A very special occasion, Acts 25:23**

#### **I. The Background: from Jerusalem to Caesarea**

1. Paul in Jerusalem:
  - a. In the temple
  - b. On the steps of the fortress Antonia
  - c. Before Sanhedrin
2. Paul in Caesarea:
  - a. Prisoner in Herod's palace
  - b. On trial before Felix, Ananias the high priest and Tertullus the lawyer
  - c. In dialogue with Felix and Drusilla
  - d. On trial before Festus and the high priests from Jerusalem

#### **II. Festus banquet: Agrippa, Bernice and the letter to the emperor**

### **III. Paul's speech**

1. His background as a Pharisee, v 2-11
2. His call to be an apostle of Christ, v 12-17
3. His message about Messiah, v 18-23
4. His dialogue with Festus and Agrippa, v 24-32

### **IV: Paul's attitude: "What I am saying is true and reasonable", v 25**

### **V. Paul's defense: a model for apologetics**

1. World view, v 8:  
"Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?"
2. History, v 26:  
"The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner."
3. Scripture, v 27 and v 22:  
"King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."  
"what the prophets and Moses said"
4. Experience, v 19: "I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven"

### **Conclusion: The universality of the gospel**

"I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains." v 29