
BERNICE AND HEROD AGRIPPA II

One of the apostle Paul's most eloquent presentations of the Gospel, along with his own personal testimony, occurs when he has an audience before King Agrippa and his sister Bernice.

An inscription found in Beirut mentions the following: "Queen Bernice and the great King A[grippa] in regards to King Herod, their great grandfather, who constructed the marbles as well as the six columns."



The Biblical story of Bernice and Agrippa is found in Acts 25-27 (NKJV):

Now when Festus had come to the province, after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. Then the high priest and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; . . . And after some days **King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus**. When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying: "There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix, "about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him.

When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed, "but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. . .

Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I also would like

to hear the man myself."

"Tomorrow," he said, "you shall hear him."

So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in. . .

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself."

So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself:



"I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, "especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently. "My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. "They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. "To this promise our twelve

tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. "Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?"

"Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. "This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. "And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

"While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, "at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. "And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'



"So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?'

And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 'But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. 'I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, 'to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

"Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, "but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. "For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. "Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, **saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come; "that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."**

Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"

But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. "For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. "King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains."

PAUL PROCLAIMED THE SAME MESSAGE AS MOSES AND THE PROPHETS:

MOSES AND THE PROPHETS TAUGHT THAT CHRIST WOULD BE A LIGHT TO BOTH THE JEWS AND GENTILES.

Deuteronomy 32:43 (NKJV) "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people."

Genesis 22:18 (NKJV) "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

Isaiah 9:1-2 (NKJV) ". . . In Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.

Isaiah 11:10 (NKJV) "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."

Isaiah 42:1 (NKJV) "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

THE PROPHETS TAUGHT THAT THE CHRIST WOULD SUFFER AND DIE

Isaiah 53:7-12 (NKJV) He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He

was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.

He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked; But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

THE PROPHETS TAUGHT THAT CHRIST WOULD BE RESURRECTED FROM THE DEAD.

Psalms 16:10 (NKJV) For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

Isaiah 26:19 (NKJV) Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.

Sources:

The Holy Bible, Author: The Lord God
Scripture taken from the New King James Version unless noted.

Banias, The Story of Caesarea, Author John F Wilson.
Note 70: Translation of the Beirut Inscription

Women in Scripture, Authors Meyers, Craven, Shepard, Kraemer
Pg. 59-60 Photograph of the Beirut artifact mentioning Bernice and Agrippa. Note: Bernice is as mentioned on a statue in Athens that honors her as a "great Queen".

The Building Program of Herod the Great 1998
Author: Roller, Page 249 a drawing of the Beirut Inscription.
Page 250 (The actual Inscription reads)
"R]egina Berenice Regis Magni A["
"Qu]od Rex Herodes Proavos Eorum Fecerat Ve["
"Marmor []que Et Columnis [S]ex"

Argubright's translation used Perseus Latin Morphological Analysis word study available at:

www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/morphindex?lang=la
Literal Translation:

Regina="Queen", Berenice="Bernice", Regis = "King or ruler", Magni="magnificent or great", A[...] assumed to be Agrippa possibly referring to King Agrippa I, Bernices father, but most likely King Agrippa II her brother and great grandson of Herod, Quo="who with respect to", Rex="king", Herodes="Herod", Proavos from proavus = "great grandfather", eorum = "their, he or she", Fecerat from facio = "construct or build", Marmor = "marbles", []que=? Inscription not clear, Et = "as well as", Columnis= "columns or pillars", [S]ex= "the number six".

The Book of Acts by author Frederick Bruce
pg. 451, note 27: on a Latin inscription from Beirut she is
called "Queen Bernice, daughter of the Great King Agrippa
the first ..." Comptes rendus de l' Academie de
Inscriptions" (1927) pg 243-244

On a Greek inscription in Athens she is called "Julia
Berenice, the great queen" (IG III.556 = CIG 361)

Art: The Conversion of Paul

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Art: Herod before Agrippa, Artist H. Anelay

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Pen and Ink Illustration of the Beirut inscription
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