

Tough Questions  
*Week Four*

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# Section 1: Acts 26:2-5

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- Jeremiah Johnston once led an early morning Bible study group.
- He challenged everyone in the group to write down their personal testimonies of coming to faith in Jesus Christ.
- He discovered few had ever done this before.
- One man, a CEO, later told Jeremiah it was one of the greatest responsibilities he had ever undertaken, but it was also the most rewarding.
- The apostle Paul's defense in Acts 26 gives us a great example to follow.

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# Section 1: Acts 26:2-5

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- Paul opened by announcing his defense. Defense renders the Greek word *apologia*, from which we get the word apologetics.
- A form of this word appears three times in this chapter (verses 1,2,24).
- Paul's story of transformation would inspire early Christians to persevere in sharing their faith, no matter the circumstances.
- Paul even declared, "I consider myself fortunate," because he recognized this as a God-ordained circumstance to share his personal testimony.

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# Section 1: Acts 26:2-5

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- In Acts 26:4-5, Paul told about his life before coming to Jesus Christ.
- We, too, should always begin our testimonies by sharing what our lives were like before Christ and what led to our need for Christ.
- Details of our lives before Christ are only important insofar as they set up our need for Christ and our transformation in Him.
- The point of sharing our story is not to offer endless details about our sins and, in effect, glorify them.

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# Section 1: Acts 26:2-5

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- We should share just enough to show the emptiness of the old life.
- Paul's testimony in Acts 26 comprises twenty-six verses, and only five of those detail Paul's life before Christ.
- In other words, less than 20 percent of his testimony was the "before" picture.
- That's a good model for us to follow.

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## Section 2: Acts 26:12-18

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- When we share our personal testimony, it is important to adapt our narrative to fit the audience. That's what Paul did.
- This was the third account of Paul's conversion story in the Book of Acts (Acts 9:1-9; 22:2-21), and while the structure was similar in each one, different details emerged.
- For example, Paul emphasized one element before King Agrippa that was not brought out in the other two accounts.

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## Section 2: Acts 26:12-18

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- When Jesus asked Paul, then named Saul, why he was persecuting Him, Jesus said, “It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”
- A goad was a sharpened branch, spear-like, used to move animals in a desired direction.
- This referred to a Greek proverb that would have been familiar to the highly educated Paul as well as the prominent people he was now addressing.

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## Section 2: Acts 26:12-18

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- Paul's conversation centered on the appearance of Christ in a bright light.
- "I saw a light from heaven brighter than the sun."
- Even today, the church has embraced that phrase as a shortened way of expressing conversion: I saw the light.
- But for Paul, it was no mere metaphor; he really saw a light.
- He had witnesses who could back this up because Christ's bright light was "shining around me and those traveling with me."



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## Section 2: Acts 26:12-18

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- Paul's testimony from this moment forward focused on the work of Christ and the change He brought to Paul's life.
- Everyone's testimony should do the same: emphasize Christ. After all, our goal is not to get people to follow us; our desire is for them to embrace and follow Christ.
- Paul's testimony did not center on a one-time event; he shared how it had changed the whole course of his life. In Christ, we are daily being transformed more and more into His likeness—and that's powerful.

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## Section 3: Acts 26:24-26

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- It takes profound courage to share our faith.
- That certainly must have been the case for Paul as he stood before King Agrippa. This family had a history of opposing Christ and His followers.
- No one could argue with the profound change seen after Paul's conversion to Christianity. Some present may have wanted to stop the influence of Paul's conversion, but not one could argue against the fact that his life had changed.
- Paul's transformation could only be attributed to his encounter with the resurrected Christ.

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## Section 3: Acts 26:24-26

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- Every sermon Paul preached ultimately centered on the resurrection of Jesus.
- He labeled the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as “most important” (1 Cor. 15:3-4).
- Now as he stood before King Agrippa, Paul again highlighted the resurrection in his testimony.
- He introduced it early on and returned to it at the end.

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## Section 3: Acts 26:24-26

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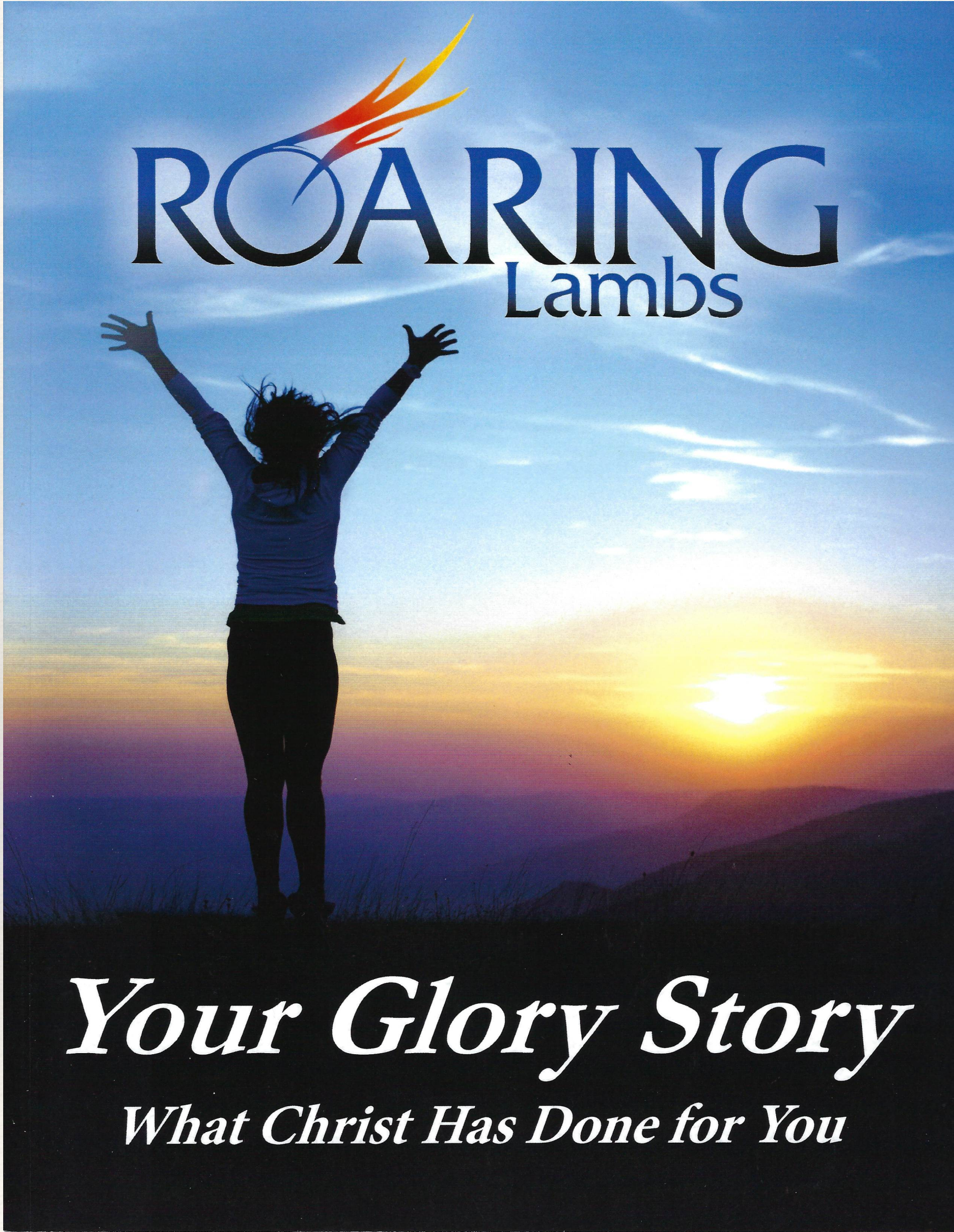
- Festus had brought Paul before the king to make his case, but now the thought of a resurrection was too much for his cynicism.
- Now the governor “exclaimed in a loud voice, ‘You’re out of your mind, Paul!’”
- Of course, Paul was not out of his mind.
- He had seen the resurrected Christ.
- All the apostles saw Jesus.

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## Section 3: Acts 26:24-26

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- As ludicrous as the resurrection may sound to people like Festus and King Agrippa, all the evidence points to the reality and validity of the resurrection of Christ.
- Add to that the evidence of a changed life.
- People may question the resurrection, but they can't dismiss the change they see in us.



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