

## Are we there yet? Acts 26.1-18



With just two more chapters from Acts to go before we reach the end of this epic journey made by Paul (and others), we could be forgiven for asking ‘if we’re there yet’ – journey’s end?

Most journeys we undertake come in three stages: we leave, we travel, we arrive. Hopefully when we set out, we have a particular destination in mind. We tend not to travel aimlessly, round and round in endless circles - our destination and arrival, being the highpoint of our journey. We’ve all probably asked or heard the familiar travel questions: “Are we there yet?” “How much longer?” “When will we be there?” Whether our journey is across land or in the spiritual realm those are the overriding questions. We want to “arrive” and we want to arrive safely at the journey’s end.

Arrival is not, however, the destination of our spiritual journey. Are we there yet? No. How much longer? Till eternity. When will we get there? Probably not this side of the grave. The answers to our spiritual journey are quite different – as Paul has discovered.

Paul depicts his own journey as one of stretching and straining forward toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus ([Philippians 3: 13-14](#)). Paul is describing a constant move forward - his longing fulfilled in his

progress towards God, but it's proving to be a torturous journey in more ways than one.

In today's passage, Paul, a prisoner awaiting to be sent to Rome for trial looks back on his life and ministry and tells King Agrippa, "And so, King Agrippa, I did not disobey the heavenly vision" (Acts 26: 19). The heavenly vision on the road to Damascus influenced his whole life and ministry. Throughout Paul's life, this vision remained with him, guiding him, sustaining him and strengthening him. It remained with him as a permanent force in his life. He faced difficulties and trials in his ministry - by the end of Acts he has been beaten, imprisoned, ship wrecked, hungry and thirsty and gone without sleep. But in the midst of all this, he is still able to say, "When I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12: 10).

The whole point of Paul's defence before Agrippa isn't just to clear himself—though Agrippa certainly recognizes Paul's innocence. Rather, he's there to persuade, to convince them of the truth of the gospel that he preaches. He's there to persuade, to reason, to convince that Christianity is true, that his gospel message is right, that there's no other message of hope.

Paul's journey has been one of exploring the meaning of Christ for the Jews as well as for the Gentiles. His epistles reflect this. Whenever and wherever people have been gripped by the vision of Christ, they have sought to understand and interpret him for their time and situation. It is a journey in which our knowledge of Christ does not end, but only begins!

Every blessing, Linda