

# **“Paul Appeals To Caesar”**

## **Acts 25:1-27**

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September 1, 2024

**Teaching Aim:** To explore the circumstances surrounding Paul’s hearings before Governor Festus of Judea and later King Agrippa II and his sister Bernice. To recognize the hatred the Jewish religious leaders had towards the Apostle Paul, even two years after they had filed their initial false charges against him. To recognize the wisdom in Paul’s decision to *“Appeal To Caesar,”* as for a second time, the Jews were plotting to assassinate him.

### **DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)**

#### **Part I: Governor Festus of Judea travels to Jerusalem to meet with the Jewish leaders (Acts 25:1-9)**

1. As we concluded **Acts chapter 24**, Felix and his wife Drusilla (who was a Jew) sent for Paul and met with him. At this meeting Paul reasoned with them about *“righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come.”* With the immoral lifestyle that Felix and Drusilla had lived, Paul’s preaching hit home and frightened them. As a result, in **Acts 24:25b**, we find Felix telling Paul to, *“Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.”* How often have you come across people who don’t have time to deal with their sin? What did Felix hope Paul would do as time dragged on and he remained under arrest in the praetorium? (See **Luke 24:26**). Was bribery legal in the Roman Empire? Then why did Felix hope Paul or his friends would bribe him? How long had Paul been in prison for before there was a leadership change in Judea (**vs. 27**)? Who became the new governor of Judea once Felix had been removed? What do we know about this man? (See Commentaries)
2. How long did Festus wait after becoming the new governor before he visited the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem (**vs. 1**)? Why did he go to them so quickly? What can we learn about the management style of Festus from this action? What happens when people procrastinate in dealing with festering problems?
3. As we come to **verse 2**, two years had gone by since Paul was originally taken to Caesarea and placed under arrest. Had the Jews who were back in Jerusalem forgotten about Paul during this time? What was the first thing that the high priest and the chief men of the Jews did once Festus arrived in Jerusalem (**vs. 3**)? Why? Why would they ask Festus for a favor this early in his tenure as governor? What was their hope? What had the Jews previously plotted to do to Paul? (See **Acts 23:12-14**)

4. How did Festus respond to the request from the Jews for a special favor (**vs. 4**)? Why do you think he responded the way he did instead of granting the Jews their request? Was this wise? What instructions do we find Festus leaving the Jewish religious leaders within **verse 5**? As a Roman citizen, Paul was innocent until proven guilty? Does our judicial system still hold to this same principle for American citizens today, or are we gradually slipping away from it?
  
5. How long did Festus remain in Jerusalem for on his initial visit (**vs. 6**)? Why did he stay that long? How far was the trip from Jerusalem to Caesarea and how long would it take on foot? Did Festus keep his word as soon as he got back to Jerusalem? How long did he wait?
  
6. What did the Jews do once they stood before Festus in Caesarea (**vs. 7**)? Were these the same charges as before? Did they successfully prove any of the charges? The tongue can be used to build people up, or it can be used to tear people down. How have you seen people use lies to destroy another person's life?
  
7. What did Paul claim in his defense (**vs. 8**)? From **verse 8**, Paul mentions three of the charges that the Jewish religious leaders brought against him. What were these three charges? Had Paul committed any of the crimes that he was accused of?
8. What did Festus ask Paul to do as he attempted to find favor with the Jews? How had this worked out for Paul the last time? (See **Acts 24:27**)?

## **Part II: Paul appeals to Caesar (Acts 25:10-12)**

1. What drastic step did Paul take in **verse 10**? Why did Paul feel he had no other choice than to make this appeal? Have you ever been falsely accused by someone for something that you didn't do? How did it feel? What steps did you take to prove your innocence? Do people still believe the lie that was spread, even today? According to **verse 11**, how sincere was Paul when it came to his innocence? Note: By appealing to Caesar, Paul forced the Roman soldiers to guard him and escort him all the way to Rome.

2. Which Caesar did Paul appeal to (**vs. 11**)? (See Commentaries) What do we know about this Caesar historically? (Hint: Search online) What wise move did Festus make before making a final decision (**vs. 12**)? Why was this a wise move? (See **Prov. 15:22**) What conclusion did the council come to?

### **Part III: Paul meets with Governor Festus, King Herod Agrippa II and his sister Bernice (Acts 25:13-27)**

1. What famous guests arrived in **verse 13** to welcome Festus into his new role? What famous biblical family were this brother and sister a part of? What can we learn about this family by searching online? It appears that King Agrippa II and Bernice visited with Festus for several days and during that time developed a friendship. What did Governor Festus decide to do after many days (**vs. 14**)? Note: This made perfect sense since Rome had given Agrippa II jurisdiction over the temple and the appointment of the Jewish high priest.
2. In **verses 15-19**, Festus laid out the situation with Paul and the difficulty he was having in coming up with a valid charge to send to Caesar; this could be hazardous to Festus' own health. To Festus, it seemed that this was more of a religious matter than a civil matter. Why did Festus consider King Agrippa II a good resource for advice? Why did so many people have a hard time understanding Paul's teachings on the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Do you know of people today who still have a hard time believing the resurrection? If so, why? (See **1 Cor. 1:18-19; 2 Cor. 4:3-4**)
3. What did Festus acknowledge in **verse 20**? What compromise did Festus try to make to satisfy the Jews? Was Paul willing to agree to this partnership (**vs. 21**)? Why or why not? According to Festus, what did Paul decide to do? King Agrippa II listened intently to Festus when he spoke about Paul's situation. What did Agrippa decide to do as a result? When would this meeting take place?
4. Would this be a private meeting, or would it come with the great pomp and ceremony of a king (**vs. 23**)? Who was in attendance for this special meeting. Since Caesarea was the Roman providential capital of Judea, who were the VIPs in attendance?

5. How did Festus introduce Paul to the assembly (**vs. 24**)? How was this introduction like that from another Roman governor in **John 19:5**. Like Felix before him, Festus found that Paul had done nothing deserving of death (**vs. 25**). (See **Acts 23:9-10, 29;26:31**) What was another reason Paul was determined to go to Rome? (See **Acts 23:10-11**)
  
6. According to **verses 26-27**, why did Festus want King Agrippa II to listen to the Apostle Paul? How might Agrippa have helped Festus? What was Festus concerned about? Was Paul willing to give up his life if necessary for the sake of the truth? Was Paul committed to following Jesus no matter what the cost to him personally? How committed are you to following Jesus today in your own life? Will you follow Him even to the death if necessary?
  
7. The lack of commitment seems to be a real problem in the Christian church today. Discuss how each of the following areas could be improved in own your life and church: 1. Commitment to serve; 2. Commitment to your marriage; 3. Commitment to love one another; 4. Commitment to personal integrity; 5. Commitment to consistency in your walk with Christ.
  
8. Warren Wiersbe wrote, *"Heaven is not just the destination, it is the motivation."* How did his future in heaven motivate Paul to press on even during the most difficult times? (See **2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:19-21, 23**) How is heaven a motivation to you today? The Christian is in a win/win situation no matter what he or she faces in life. In what way are you in a win/win situation as you face the challenges of life?

#### **MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!***

- Governor Festus was a more honorable and fair-minded ruler than his predecessor Felix.
- Festus' desire to govern honorably is demonstrated by his trip to Jerusalem just three days after assuming his new role to meet with the Jewish religious leaders and the Jewish people.
- Every Roman citizen had the right to a fair trial, and if not, they could appeal to Caesar.
- Paul realized he would not be able to get a fair trial in Jerusalem with the Jewish religious leaders, and so he used his option as a Roman citizen to make an appeal to Caesar.
- The Caesar that Paul appealed to was no other than Nero, the most insane and violent of all of the Caesars; although at this point Nero was still relatively mild in his behavior.
- Festus was desperate to find some offense against Paul that he could share in his letter to Caesar so that he wouldn't look bad.
- As a result, Festus asked visiting King Agrippa II and Bernice his sister to give him their advice after listening to Paul.

