

Jesus Christ's work through the Apostles to the Uttermost

Acts 25 Governors one and two

"... and ye shall be witness unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judae'a, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." **Acts 1:8**

Introduction: Paul had been held in Caesarea a full two years. No doubt there were many opportunities for Paul to witness to passing dignitaries and officials as we read in the previous chapter how Felix *"sent for him the oftener, and communed with him."* As Paul winds down the path God has for him, no doubt there is purpose in his present circumstances. And there is, here in chapter 25 Paul would have opportunity to witness to Porcius Festus, King Agrippa II, and Bernice. If this change of ruling governor happened in 59 or 60 AD like most surmise, in just six years there would be a Jewish revolt that would end in 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem. Certainly, these were tumultuous times.

- I. **Politics of Festus 1-6**
- II. **Petition of Paul 7-12**
- III. **Pomp of King Agrippa II 13-27**

I. Politics of Festus 1-6

A. Provincial Trip v1

1. This province was Judea, which was the Roman controlled province over which Festus assumed responsibility in the room of Felix.
2. It would be normal for Festus to travel to Jerusalem and see the state of affairs.
3. After 3 days he would make the trip to Jerusalem.

B. Plot to Kill Paul v2,3

1. **v2** Immediately the high priest and ruling body, the Sanhedrin *"...informed him [Festus] against Paul,..."*
2. Not only did they inform him, but the Bible says they *"besought him,..."*
3. Interestingly the word used for 'besought' is the term *parakaleō*, similar to that used in respect to the Holy Spirit (*paraklētos* "comforter"). This beseeching gives the indication of coming alongside of or to call to one's side. In this sense they were trying to prejudice the mind of Festus.
4. **v3** Verse 3 indicates they further *"desired favour against him,..."* supposing to kill Paul *"in the way"* if Festus would appease them with this favor.
5. We are reminded by these statements that the world is certainly exerting their influence against the cause of Christ.
6. We are also reminded that even in spite of the wickedness of man and the Adversaries devices, God's plan and design for Paul would not be thwarted.
7. Lastly, we are shown the importance of exerting godly influence upon others.

8. **I Timothy 4:12** *“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”*
9. Paul exhorted Timothy to *“be thou an example of the believers...”* In other words Timothy was to live a life that influenced others.
10. **In word** – The thing that you say.
11. **In conversation** – The manner of your daily life.
12. **In charity** – How you love the brethren and love God.
13. **In spirit** – How you display temperance concerning your passions, being meek, patient and longsuffering.
14. **In faith** – A constant trust in God and His Word.
15. **In purity** – Moral excellence.

C. Power Struggle v4-6

1. **v4** Festus answer in short was no.
2. What was the reason for this “no.” The Bible does not tell us, other than the decree that Paul should be kept where he is. Perhaps there were political reasons to establish a precedence of control. Whatever the reason, Paul would remain in Caesarea.
3. **v5** Festus then requires the accuser to *“...accuse this man...”* themselves.
4. Festus was not willing to condemn this man without knowing *“...if there be any wickedness in him.”*
5. Oftentimes it is that we can hastily jump to a conclusion without hearing the whole matter.
6. **Proverbs 18:13** *“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”*
7. **v6 We find Festus** *“...tarried among them...”*

II. Petition of Paul 7-12

A. The Jews Accusations v7,8

1. The complaints they made were *“grievous.”*
2. This simply means they were ‘heavy’ or ‘weighty.’ Perhaps spoken well but full of hot air. They were framed the right way, they just did not possess any substance.
3. **The complaints they made were empty**, *“...which they could not prove.”*
4. What a tremendous testimony, that under the scrutiny of this governor, there could be no railing accusation.
5. It is of utmost importance that we do not give any occasion to the enemy.
6. **I Timothy 3:7** *“Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”*

B. The Rulers Concession v9

1. Festus' reasoning was not justice but political stability and a garnering of political capital. Notice he was *"willing to do the Jews a pleasure..."*
2. Of course, the Jewish leaders wanted Paul to be moved away from the protection of the ruler so they might kill him.

C. The Prisoners Petition v10-12

1. **v10** *"The said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat..."*
2. Paul again as a Roman Citizen had a right to be tried *"at Caesar's judgement seat..."*
3. Festus represented Rome's judgement seat, and his suggestion to be judged by the Jews was an abrogation of his responsibilities and an appeasement to the Jewish leaders.
4. Also, we find that Porcius Festus was more than likely from the clan that came up with 'Ad Caesarem Provoco,' ('I appeal to Caesar')
5. Festus it seems was all politics.
6. Festus now finds himself in a political situation that could not be handled by the Jews. At the advisement of his political advisors, he submits to send Paul to Caesar.
7. **v11** Paul was willing to submit himself to the laws of the land, notice he states, *"...I refuse not to die: but..."*
8. It is amazing to see God's work in such a turbulent environment. Paul could freely state concerning the laws of the land, *"to the Jews have I done no wrong..."* (v10)
9. What are we to gather from these circumstances?
10. **We are always to do justly.**
11. **Micah 6:8** *"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, **but to do justly**, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"*
12. **God holds the rulers' heart in his hand.**
13. **Proverbs 21:1** *"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."*
14. *"Paul's owning that he ought to be judged at Caesar's judgment-seat plainly proves that **Christ's ministers are not exempted from the jurisdiction of the civil powers.**"* – Matthew Henry (Of course, in regard to transgressing Gods law we are to please God rather than men.)
15. **Romans 13:1** *"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."*

III. Pomp of King Agrippa II 13-27

A. Time moves on v13,14

1. **v13** *“And after certain days...”*
2. **v14** *“And when they had been there many days...”*
3. Can you imagine the patience in suffering?

B. Telling of the story v14-22

1. **v14** *“Festus declared Paul’s cause unto the king...”*
2. **v16,17** We see Festus setting a precedent of order for his rule.
3. **v18** Declares Festus’ bewilderment at what had taken place.
4. **v19** We find Festus’ unbelief. The *“superstition”* about Jesus Christ. We can gather that Paul certainly had informed Festus about ‘the way.’
5. **Many there are that will see the Bible as nothing more than superstition.**
6. **v20** Here it is clear that Festus wants no part of this superstition, but would rather get rid of the current problem.
7. **v21,22** Show not only Paul’s appeal but also the door being open for Paul now to give witness to King Agrippa and Bernice.

C. Trial before Agrippa v23-27

1. **v23** Here the opportunity has broadened, for the *“chief captains, and the principal men of the city”*, were in attendance to hear this testimony.
2. Notice also the fanfare of the world. King Agrippa is lauded with *“great pomp...”*
3. **v25 Paul is once again declared innocent, but yet is still on his way to Rome.** *“But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death...”*
4. **v26,27** As we close the chapter and begin the next, Festus has a problem, what will he say to the to the Emperor concerning Paul’s case?