

The Book of Acts; Lesson #12 – Confinement in Caesarea (Acts 24, Acts 25, Acts 26)

Memory Verse

Acts 26:29 (NKJV) 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.”

Yet, those were still years of deep anxiety, as well as of tedious confinement in which the apostle seems to have had no support of any kind from the church in Jerusalem, whose leaders “still cherished a feeling that Paul should be held largely responsible for the existing prejudice.”—The Acts of the Apostles, p. 403.

Before Felix Latin - Happy; prosperous.

Felix—the Roman procurator of Judea before whom Paul “reasoned” (Acts 24:25). He appears to have expected a bribe from Paul, and therefore had several interviews with him. The “worthy deeds” referred to in 24:2 was his clearing the country of robbers and impostors. At the end of a two years’ term, Porcius (poor-see-us) Festus was appointed in the room of Felix (A.D. 60), Drusilla, the daughter of Herod Agrippa, having been induced by Felix to desert her husband, the king of Emesa, became his adulterous companion. She was seated beside him when Paul “reasoned” before the judge.

Accused of Seditious

Acts 24:1–9 (NKJV) Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator named Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul. And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: “Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, ³ we accept it always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. ⁴ Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us. ⁵ For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. ⁶ He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law. ⁷ But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took him out of our hands, ⁸ commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him.” ⁹ And the Jews also assented, maintaining that these things were so.

The Defense Before Felix

Acts 24:10–21 (NKJV) Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered: “Inasmuch as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself, ¹¹ because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship. ¹² And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city. ¹³ Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me. ¹⁴ But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. ¹⁵ I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. ¹⁶ This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men. ¹⁷ “Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation, ¹⁸ in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor with tumult. ¹⁹ They ought to have been here before you to object if they had anything against me. ²⁰ Or else let those who are here themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council, ²¹ unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, ‘Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.’ ”

Luke 21:12–15 (NKJV) But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake. ¹³ But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. ¹⁴ Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; ¹⁵ for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.

***Acts 9:15–16 (NKJV) But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.”**

Felix Procrastinates Acts 24:22–27

Acts 24:25–26 (NKJV) Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, “Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.” ²⁶ Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him.

Mark 6:20 (NKJV) *for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.*

Before Festus Joyful; Festal; Prosperous.

When Felix gave place to Festus, being “willing to do the Jews a pleasure,” he left Paul bound.

FESTUS, PORCIUS (poor-see-us) —the successor of Felix (A.D. 60) as procurator of Judea (Acts 24:27). A few weeks after he had entered on his office the case of Paul, then a prisoner at Caesarea, was reported to him.

Acts 25:7 (NKJV) *When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove,*

Mark 15:3 (NKJV) *And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing.*

***Mark 14:55–56** *Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.*

Before Agrippa

HEROD AGRIPPA II.—son of Agrippa I, Great-grandson of Herod the Great, was born at Rome, 27. He was the brother of Bernice and Drusilla. The Emperor Claudius raised him to the rank of king, and made governor over the tetrarchy of Philip (Acts 25:13; 26:2, 7). It was before him that Paul delivered (59) his speech recorded in Acts 26. He died (the last of the Herods) at Rome, at the age of about seventy years, 100.

Acts 25:13–22 *And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus. ¹⁴ 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, ¹⁵ about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him. ¹⁶ To them I answered, ‘It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.’ ¹⁷ Therefore when they had come together, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in. ¹⁸ When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed, ¹⁹ but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had*

died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. ²⁰ And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters. ²¹ But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar.” ²² Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I also would like to hear the man myself.” “Tomorrow,” he said, “you shall hear him.”

Paul’s Defense Acts 26:1–23

Acts 25:23 *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.*

Paul Before the Leaders

Agrippa Deflects Paul’s Challenge

Acts 26:16–18 (NKJV) *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.’*

Acts 26:24–32 (NKJV) *Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!” ²⁵ But he said, “I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason.*

***Acts 26:26–27** (NKJV) *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. ²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.” ²⁸*

Acts 26:27–32 *Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You almost persuade me to become a Christian.” ²⁹ 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.” ³⁰ When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; ³¹ and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, “This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains.” ³² Then Agrippa said to Festus, “This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”*