

Acts 25.1-22

Three Men, Three Choices

Section of Acts > REPETITIVE > Paul under ARREST, Several TRIALS

Paul's Imprisonment and Defense in Acts

1. Angry mob of Jews in Temple at Jerusalem – chapter 22
2. Jewish Sanhedrin in Jerusalem – chapter 23
3. Trial before Roman Governor Felix in Caesarea – chapter 24
4. Trial before Roman Governor Festus in Caesarea – chapter 25
5. Trial before Festus and King Agrippa in Caesarea – chapter 26
6. Awaiting Trial before Caesar in Rome – chapter 28

Acts 25 & 26 – ROMAN Gov / KING of Jews / APOSTLE of Church

LUKE – Snapshot of Character – Motives >> *SPIRITUAL CONDITION*

See NO Inherent Conflict > btwn Christian Faith and Citizenship

Gospel > Message of PEACE – Promotes Order, Respect, FREEDOM

Show Rulers in 21st C our Intentions & Integrity as Jesus Followers

Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

1 Peter 2.17

Chs 25 & 26 > See PICTURES of HUMAN NATURE and CHARACTER

1. Man of Caesar

Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus...

Acts 24.27

Exchange of ROMAN GOVs of JUDEA -- FELIX was DISMISSED

According to Josephus, Felix was recalled to Rome in order to explain his savage suppression of a dispute between Jews and Syrians over their respective civil rights in Caesarea, and would have been severely punished but for his brother Pallas' appeal to Nero. I. Howard Marshall

a. Decisive > Eager Festus, NEW Job, Meets Biggest CHALLENGE

v. 1 Now three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea

Long, Difficult, Tiring Voyage from ROME > Jumps into DUTIES

PROVINCE: Judea > CAPITAL: Caesarea > HOT SPOT: Jerusalem

Pilate, Felix – Several Others > MAJOR CONFLICTS w/ Jewish Subjects

v. 6 After he stayed among them not more than *eight or ten days with them*, he went down to Caesarea. And the *next day* he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought...

Festus INHERITED Problem of Paul because INDECISIVENESS Felix

...when two years had passed... And desiring to do the Jews a favor left Paul in prison
Acts 24.27

v. 17 Festus: "When they came together here, I made *no delay, but on the next day took my seat in the tribunal...*"

UNDERSTANDS What Many Rulers TODAY Do NOT
JUSTICE DELAYED is JUSTICE DENIED

b. Diplomatic > Festus Sees Chance to build Good Relations w/ JEWS

vs. 2-5 Jerusalem...chief priests and principal men of the Jews laid out their case against Paul, and they urged him, asking as a favor against Paul that he summon him to Jerusalem – because they were planning an ambush to kill him along the way. Festus replied that Paul was being kept in Caesarea

'KILL PAUL' Group been ACTIVE since P's ARRIVAL in Jerusalem

2 yrs Earlier > 40 Men VOWED to NOT EAT > Till Paul was DEAD

40 MEN Probably REALLY HUNGRY Now!!

One hand washes the other – that is politics. Festus wanted a compromise. He agreed to judge Paul, but instead of doing it in Caesarea, he decided to hold Paul's trial in Jerusalem. R.C. Sproul

Roman Judge could NOT Move TRIAL w/OUT CONSENT of Accused!!

v. 9 Festus wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?"

'Like GOING for SWIM there in that BAY of Ravenous SHARKS?'

Paul's death would be a fine way for Festus to win everyone's favor. John Calvin

c. Dismay Case could put BRAKES on Festus' ADVANCING Career

JEWS > Most DIFFICULT People in his JURISDICTION to GOVERN

Jews Passionately want LITTLE MAN Executed > **ROMAN Citizen**

FESTUS had CHARGES agnst Paul > But NO EVIDENCE to Prove

NO WITNESSES to Crime, CASE Should have BEEN CLOSED

v. 8 Paul made his defense: "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense."

POLITICAL EXPEDIENCE gains the UPPER HAND > Justice DENIED

v. 10 Paul: "I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, *as you yourself know very well.*

“CAESAR” 8 X’s in Chapter > RIGHT of Citizens to Appeal to him

PAUL took Case OUT of Gov’s Hands > DEMANDING to go to ROME

vs. 14-20 Festus laid Paul's case before the king...When the accusers stood up, they brought no charge in his case of such evils as I supposed...some points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive. I was at a loss how to investigate such matters...

Word for RELIGION = SUPERSTITION > ‘Derogatory’ SECULAR Man

"This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment." Agrippa said to Festus,
"This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar." Acts 26.31,32

Gov FESTUS > Appear Foolish to Caesar > Send Innocent ‘Criminal’

d. Denial > Rare Opportunity to hear God’s Message > Missed Chance

Festus Highly Respectable: Dilligent, Just, Maintains Order, Reasonable

Predictable, Well Ordered, Closed World-View, Under GRIP Roman Law

Order – Verifiable Events – CYCLE – Life & Death – Beginning & End

26.22 Paul: “I stand here and testify to small and great alike...that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead...”

ROMAN Gov / KING of Jews / NOW HEAR an APOSTLE of Church

PAUL PREACHING for a VERDICT > NOT his OWN ACQUITTAL

PAUL PREACHING HEARERS Verdict about JESUS

v. 24 At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane."

FESTUS > Patience Exhausted > NOT Focused on in his SOUL, his JOB

NEEDS EVIDENCE against PRISONER, NOT his IMAGINATIONS

Paul spoke seriously and with passion about Christ’s resurrection. But Festus, in his pride...showed how carelessly he listened to him when talking about Christ...preaching is of no use at all unless the Spirit of God inwardly touches people’s hearts. John Calvin

Festus > PAUL sounds IMPRESSIVE > But What he Says is CRAZY!

Only God knows Festus Destiny: 2 yrs after becoming Gov AD 62 DEAD

2. Man of the Crown

Herod Agrippa II, Herod in NT = Dynasty, Appt KING of Jews by Rome

a. Cultivating = Kiss Up > Petty King needs SUPPORT of Roman Gov

v. 13 A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus.

Puppet KING > Appointed by ROME > Concession to JEWISH Tradition

Herod Agrippa II, began Rule @ 17 (Father's death) Kingdom Downsized

FATHER: Herod Agrippa I - GREAT Grandfather: HEROD the Great

NOT 'Good Jews' – MIXED BLOOD with IDUMEANS

Task: Rule Over Jews > Care for Temple, Appoints Jewish High Priest

Agrippa Supported Romans as Destroyed Jerusalem & Temple 70 AD

AGRIPPA > LAST Member of the HERODIAN Dynasty

b. Careless > FLAUNT their ROYAL PRIVILEGES

v. 13 King Agrippa & Bernice > NOT Husband & Wife, **Bro & Sis**

She lived with her brother – a liaison which appears to have invited scandal-mongering...

I. Howard Marshall

v. 23 The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room
Bold, Shameless > 'Who cares what People Say' < 'OUT' of CLOSET

This incestuous relationship became common chatter of Rome. H.W. Hoehner

Purple Robes of Royalty & Gold Crowns > Gov. SCARLET ROBE

High Ranking Military Officers > Important CITIZENS of Caesarea

POMP & CEREMONY for Little Jewish Man who PREACHED Jesus

According to tradition, Paul was only a little fellow and unprepossessing in appearance balding, with beetle brows, hooked nose, and bandy legs... Wearing neither crown nor gown, but only handcuffs and perhaps a plain prisoner's tunic he nevertheless dominated the court... John Stott

c. Curious v. 22 Agrippa to Festus, "I'd like to hear this man myself."

JESUS aroused Curiosity of Their GREAT UNCLE > Herod ANTIPAS

When he (Pilate) learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because *for a long time he had been wanting to see him*. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform some miracle. Luke 23.7,8

Great Grandfather – Herod the Great > Also Curious about JESUS

Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." Matthew 2.7,8

Tickled their Curiosity > NOT Troubled by CONVICTION of SIN

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" Matt 7.13-14

3. Man of the Cross

a. Crucified > Cross MESSAGE & MANDATE > Preach & Practice

For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 1 Corinthians 2.2

Substitutionary ATONEMENT > Christ DIED FOR Us > Our PLACE

Took OUR Sins, Guilt, Punishment, Death, Guilt, Hell, Punishment

May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Galatians 6.14

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2.20

JESUS > Life Giving DEATH > We FOLLOW Him > Rise to NEW LIFE

EMBRACE CROSS > EMPTY >> Temporary Suffering of Living Lord!

Jan 2007 Suspected Thyroid Cancer – CUT THROAT OPEN! FEAR!!

Took ½ Thyroid Found Cancer – Still Eat, Still Talk, Still Live

April 2007 – Come Back, Other Half – Flew from KZ to Singapore

Wheeled into Surgery – Shook Hands w Doc's in OR – Slit Throat Again!

b. Convinced > Two Years in Prison > NO END in Sight > Determined

Life w JESUS began Saul the ATTACKER – BLINDED by God’s Light
The Lord said (to Ananias regarding Paul), “I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”
Acts 9.15

25 yrs Later: FIRM RESOLVE Unbroken Speaks to Governor FESTUS:
vs. 10,11 Paul answered: "I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, *I do not refuse to die.*”

“I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead" 23.6

I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.
Acts 24.15

Paul uses RIGHTS of Roman CITIZENSHIP seeking ROMAN Justice
Sees NO HOPE of Finding Justice or Release Here > Perhaps in Rome
NO CONFLICT btwn TRUSTING God & APPEALING to CAESAR

c. Compassion > PROOF that it is NOT ABOUT HIM

“KILL PAUL” Group > HARD at WORK in JERUSALEM for 2 years
CAME to Jerusalem with LOVE OFFERING for their POOR, NEEDY!

v. 7 When Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove.

Caesar’s Man > CLOSED Minded Gov > You’re CRAZY!

Man of CROWN > SELF-CENTERED REGENT > You’re CUTE!

Man of CROSS > Man of COMPASSION >> May GOD SAVE YOU!!

Beyond Self Concern > When DIED w CHRIST you Live for Others

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. 2 Corinthians 5.14-15

d. Consistent Section of Acts > Repetitive Paul under Arrest, Trials

No Hint Paul BORED - 25+ Yrs Min – 2+ Yrs Prison – No Light Ahead

Paul learned from Isaiah > Following Jesus is not a sprint; it is a marathon.
Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40.31

1st Soaring, 2nd Running, and finally walking – walking is the climax!
 Rare, Wonderful Days Xtian life we Soar on “eagle’s wings” of faith
 Sometimes get Burst of God’s Energy to Run and not get Tired
 Life Usually Routine – Even in Prison Cell – Not Soaring Every Day
 God’s Desire for Us – Dozens ref in Scripture > WALKING with God!

* * * * *

Congregational Prayer - Psalm 64

Hear my voice, O God, in my complaint; preserve my life from dread of the enemy.
Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked, from the throng of evildoers,
 who whet their tongues like swords, who aim bitter words like arrows,
shooting from ambush at the blameless, shooting at him suddenly and without fear.

They hold fast to their evil purpose; they talk of laying snares secretly, thinking, “Who can see them?”

They search out injustice, saying, “We have accomplished a diligent search.”

For the inward mind and heart of a man are deep.

Ask the Lord to Show you Life, including Yourself, from His perspective. And seek His grace and mercy!

But God shoots his arrow at them; they are wounded suddenly.

They are brought to ruin, with their own tongues turned against them; all who see them will wag their heads.

Then all mankind fears; they tell what God has brought about and ponder what he has done.

Let the righteous one rejoice in the LORD and take refuge in him! Let all the upright in heart exult!”

“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world”

(1 John 2.1,2)