

## Acts Chapter Twenty-Five

### Acts 25:1-4

**Festus therefore, having arrived in the province, three days later went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. And the chief priests and the leading men of the Jews brought charges against Paul; and they were urging him, requesting a concession against Paul, that he might have him brought to Jerusalem (*at the same time*, setting an ambush to kill him on the way). Festus then answered that Paul was being kept in custody at Caesarea and that he himself was about to leave shortly.**

- History sees Festus as a better man than Felix. He replaces Felix in 59 AD.
- As soon as he takes on his position—he heads up to Jerusalem to assess situation
- Meanwhile—two years have passed since Paul is imprisoned in Caesarea.
- It would appear that Felix has conveyed the nature of issue about Paul to Festus—we don't know if Festus is aware of the plot to kill Paul—by the religious leaders.
- As a new governor comes in—perhaps Paul's hopes are raised for freedom
- His imprisonment has meant protective custody
- Jews sought to murder him rather than give opportunity for justice at a trial

### Acts 25:5-8

**“Therefore,” he said, “let the influential men among you go there with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them prosecute him.”**

**And after he had spent not more than eight or ten days among them, he went down to Caesarea; and on the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. And after he had arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges against him which they could not prove; while Paul said in his own defense, “I have committed no offense either against the Law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar.”**

- Accusations are repeated again by Jewish leaders
- Defense is repeated—there is no basis for accusation—including any reason for Roman imprisonment—a crime against Caesar.

## **Acts 25:9-12**

**But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me on these *charges?*" But Paul said, "I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. I have done no wrong to *the* Jews, as you also very well know. "If then I am a wrongdoer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die; but if none of those things is *true* of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar." Then when Festus had conferred with his council, he answered, "You have appealed to Caesar, to Caesar you shall go."**

- Festus asks Paul if he is willing to go to Jerusalem to be tried—seeing that this is a religious matter.
- Paul stands on his Roman citizenship—makes an appeal to Caesar.
- Two years prior—Paul had heard directly from the Lord that he would testify in Rome—Acts 23:11
- In Romans 1:9-10 and 15:30-32—Paul conveys his prayer to appear in Rome.
- It was the right of every Roman citizen to have his case heard by Caesar himself (this is like an appeal to the supreme court of the Roman Empire).

## **Acts 25:13-16**

**Now when several days had elapsed, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea, and paid their respects to Festus. And while they were spending many days there, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, "There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix; and when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews brought charges against him, asking for a sentence of condemnation upon him. "And I answered them that it is not the custom of the Romans to hand over any man before the accused meets his accusers face to face, and has an opportunity to make his defense against the charges.**

- Herod Agrippa ruled in the part of the Roman Empire NE of Festus.
- Bernice—Agrippa's sister—had been married to Herod of Chalcis who died—for awhile she was mistress to Titus/the adopted son of Vespasian—the conqueror of Jerusalem in 70 AD.
- Since Festus has just come into his office—the king comes for a visit.
- Festus shared about the unusual situation concerning Paul—with the king
- Our law is built on some of these same principles today

## **Acts 25:17-22**

**“And so after they had assembled here, I made no delay, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal, and ordered the man to be brought. “And when the accusers stood up, they *began* bringing charges against him not of such crimes as I was expecting; but they *simply* had some points of disagreement with him about their own religion and about a certain dead man, Jesus, whom Paul asserted to be alive. “And being at a loss how to investigate such matters, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there stand trial on these matters. “But when Paul appealed to be held in custody for the Emperor’s decision, I ordered him to be kept in custody until I send him to Caesar.” And Agrippa *said* to Festus, “I also would like to hear the man myself.” “Tomorrow,” he said, “you shall hear him.”**

- We see how resurrection is viewed through the eyes of a pagan
- Paul always makes resurrection the issue—Festus picks up on this emphasis.
- This meeting with Paul is arranged between a king and a governor—used by God to fulfill prophecy.

## **Acts 25: 23-27**

**And so, on the next day when Agrippa had come together with Bernice, amid great pomp, and had entered the auditorium accompanied by the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. And Festus said, “King Agrippa, and all you gentlemen here present with us, you behold this man about whom all the people of the Jews appealed to me, both at Jerusalem and here, loudly declaring that he ought not to live any longer. “But I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death; and since he himself appealed to the Emperor, I decided to send him. “Yet I have nothing definite about him to write to my lord. Therefore I have brought him before you *all* and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the investigation has taken place, I may have something to write. “For it seems absurd to me in sending a prisoner, not to indicate also the charges against him.”**

- Festus asks Agrippa to help him with what charges should be presented before Caesar.
- Paul has committed nothing worthy of death—important to this case.

# Acts Chapter Twenty-five Workbook

## Key Words:

## Harmonize:

Read Psalm 5 and 7

## Dig:

- 1) Two years have passed since the last trial. What does the request from the Jews to Festus demonstrate?
- 2) How willing was Festus to attend to Paul in a speedy manner?
- 3) There is a key concerning the attitude of Festus toward the Jews—in this chapter. What is it?
- 4) What evidence is presented in this trial? What arguments are made against Paul?
- 5) Can we discern the accusations from Paul's defense? Where does he declare his innocence?
- 6) Who is Caesar—a person or a title?
- 7) What principles of Roman law are seen in chapter 25?
- 8) What promises to Paul are being fulfilled in this chapter?

- 9) Agrippa is the son of Herod (who put James to death)—why might he be interested in hearing Paul?

**Discuss:**

- 1) How should a dispute between believers get settled? Have you seen this done well?
- 2) If it was a crime to be a Christian—what evidence could be found against you from last week?

**Point of Prayer:**

Pray for the members of our Supreme Court.

**Integrate:**

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

**Application:**

- 1) Do you have any long term grudges (if not with an individual—perhaps a company or agency)?
- 2) Who are you most likely to consult to get some wisdom in a matter?
- 3) What trials in our country became a national spectacle—not just a normal trial? What causes this to happen?
- 4) How does the church handle discipline? Have you seen it done well?
- 5) Are you aware of any disputes between Christians that were taken to the courts to settle? What was the outcome? What happened to their relationship?

# Acts Chapter Twenty-five Workbook

## Key Words:

## Harmonize:

Read Psalm 5 and 7

## Dig:

- 1) Two years have passed since the last trial. What does the request from the Jews to Festus demonstrate?
- 2) How willing was Festus to attend to Paul in a speedy manner?
- 3) There is a key concerning the attitude of Festus toward the Jews—in this chapter. What is it?
- 4) What evidence is presented in this trial? What arguments are made against Paul?
- 5) Can we discern the accusations from Paul's defense? Where does he declare his innocence?
- 6) Who is Caesar—a person or a title?
- 7) What principles of Roman law are seen in chapter 25?
- 8) What promises to Paul are being fulfilled in this chapter?

- 9) Agrippa is the son of Herod (who put James to death)—why might he be interested in hearing Paul?

**Discuss:**

- 1) How should a dispute between believers get settled? Have you seen this done well?
- 2) If it was a crime to be a Christian—what evidence could be found against you from last week?

**Point of Prayer:**

Pray for the members of our Supreme Court.

**Integrate:**

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

**Application:**

- 1) Do you have any long term grudges (if not with an individual—perhaps a company or agency)?
- 2) Who are you most likely to consult to get some wisdom in a matter?
- 3) What trials in our country became a national spectacle—not just a normal trial? What causes this to happen?
- 4) How does the church handle discipline? Have you seen it done well?
- 5) Are you aware of any disputes between Christians that were taken to the courts to settle? What was the outcome? What happened to their relationship?