

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 4TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

PAUL APPEALS TO CAESAR (ACTS 25:1–12) A REGIME CHANGE

At the end of Ch. 24, two years had passed when Luke tells us Felix was replaced by Festus. Once there was a new governor, Paul's Jewish accusers thought they would retry the case.

- Historical writings tell that where Felix was a bad man, Festus was a fairly good man who governed well despite the problems that were left for him.

MOTIVES REVEALED

The religious leaders knew Paul would be found not guilty in a fair trial, so Luke tells us their intentions were not just to put Paul on trial again before Festus.

- Their request for another trial was to have Paul brought from Caesarea to Jerusalem so that they could **"ambush [Paul] along the road to kill him."**

RELIGION DOESN'T SAVE; JESUS DOES!

We see the growth of corruption among the religious leaders of this time. In Acts 23, it was the Jewish Zealots who were plotting murder. Now, in Acts 25, it is the religious leaders initiating a plot to murder.

- **Religion not connected to God is dangerous.** These religious leaders were now lying and plotting murder.

SEEING PAST THE TRIALS AND TROUBLES

We do not know if Festus learned of the plot as Lysias did, but either way, Festus refused to grant Paul's transport to Jerusalem.

- God protected Paul from the first plot with 470 Roman soldiers (Acts 23:23) and is protecting him here. **Do we see God's protection in Paul's life through every trial he faced?**

FALSELY ACCUSED

Paul once again was in front of a Gentile ruler, being falsely accused by Jewish religious leaders.

- Many in the Bible were targets of false accusations (Joseph in Genesis 39 and Daniel in Daniel 6), and in a sense **we are all targets of false accusations** (Revelation 12:10). But thankfully, **Jesus is our defender and intercessor** (Romans 8:33–34).

NOT SETTING PAUL UP

Festus was a good man, and he knew that keeping a good relationship with the Jewish people of his province was important.

- Festus asking Paul if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem for a trial shows that he most likely did not know about the plot to kill Paul, but he made the inquiry in an attempt to please the religious leaders.

PAUL APPEALS TO CAESAR

Festus's request probably made Paul wonder if he was sympathetic to his accusers. Knowing the evidence was on his side and he could win in a fair trial, Paul would make his appeal to be heard by Caesar Nero.

- The first five years of Nero's reign, he was regarded as wise and just. It was later that he would become a brutal enemy of Christians.

PROVIDING INFORMATION (ACTS 25:13–22)

FELIX INFORMS HEROD

Paul's appeal to Caesar would not happen so quickly. Several days after Festus agreed to send Paul to Rome, King Agrippa and his sister, Bernice, arrived in Caesarea for a "courtesy call."

- Rome gave legal jurisdiction over the temple in Jerusalem to King Herod Agrippa II. He was an expert in Jewish customs and religious matters, so **Felix presented Paul's case to Him.**

FIGURES OF OPPOSITION

This King Agrippa's great-grandfather tried to kill Jesus as a baby, and his grandfather was responsible for beheading John the Baptist. His father martyred the Apostle James, and now Paul would stand in front of the current Herod.

- King Herod Agrippa II did not have jurisdiction in this matter, but **he definitely had influence on Festus's decision.**

PAUL IS OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE TO FESTUS

Festus tells Herod there was no evidence against Paul, nor did they claim anything against him that warranted death (**"no charge against him of the evils I was expecting"**).

- Festus saw their claims as inconsequential to him or Rome (**"some disagreements...about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, a dead man Paul claimed to be alive"**).

"A CERTAIN JESUS"

Festus's words show that he did not know much about Jesus and had only heard about him through what others were saying.

- **"Brethren, this is why we must keep on preaching Jesus Christ, because he is still so little known. The masses of this city are as ignorant of Jesus as Festus was"** (Spurgeon).

ARRANGING A MEETING

After hearing all that Festus had shared about Paul, Agrippa requested to meet with and hear from Paul himself. Festus agreed to set a meeting between them the next day.

- Paul was going to get **the chance to share God's truth with another "king" of the earth**, just as he was told he would at his conversion (Acts 9:15).

IMPORTANCE (ACTS 25:23–27)

"[THEY] CAME WITH GREAT POMP"

The day came for Agrippa and Bernice to hear the evidence against Paul, and they made it a spectacle.

- Agrippa and Bernice tried to make this about them bringing **"military commanders and prominent men of the city,"** but **God allowed their ego to provide a great opportunity for Paul.**

GOD ESTABLISHES IMPORTANCE

The procession, pomp, and pageantry was meant to show all onlookers who was important and who was not.

- **The world's standards of importance are not the same as God's.** The leaders and prominent men thought that they were something great without recognizing the greatness of this prisoner in front of them.

SAVING FACE IN FRONT OF CAESAR

Luke was careful to record Festus's proclamation that Paul was innocent.

- This hearing was only being held so that Festus could have something to write Caesar about instead of essentially saying, **"Here is this man accused of something, and he's probably innocent, but I sent him to you to figure out."**

A NEW TRIAL

- Paul defended himself in front of Felix only to have to repeat his defense two years later. We should come to expect repeated trials in this life (John 16:33).
- Jesus prepared us for this reality by telling us these things will come.
- Jesus promised us His presence in the trials so we can have peace through Him.

ACCUSATIONS

- Satan is referred to as "the accuser of our brothers and sisters" in Revelation 12:10.
- Satan is constantly bringing charges, shortcomings, and sins against us before God and the minds of Believers.
- Satan may be the accuser, but our defender and intercessor is greater (Romans 8:33–34).

A CERTAIN JESUS

- We are created in the image of God, but so many of us are guilty of creating a god in our image. The Jesus of the Bible saves where the Jesus of our own design does not.
- Do we know what others say about Him, or **do we know Him personally as Lord and Savior?**