

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 4TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

TRIAL (ACTS 25:1-12) FESTUS, THE NEW GOVERNOR

Shortly after taking his place as governor, Festus travels to Jerusalem where he meets the Sanhedrin.

- It's been two years and they are still actively trying to eliminate Paul.
- Where they failed with Felix, they hoped to succeed with Festus.
- **Evil doesn't stop just because it loses a battle, and neither should we.**

DOWN TO CAESAREA

Festus foils their plan and culls the crown by inviting only those with authority to come to Caesarea and accuse Paul there.

- After a week in Jerusalem, they traveled to Caesarea, and the next day, the trial began.
- Sitting in the place of judgment, Festus listened to the old, unprovable charges that were kept alive by anger, fear, and jealousy.

PAUL'S DEFENSE

Paul kept it simple.

- "Neither against the Jewish law, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I sinned in any way" (v. 8).
- Every accusation was false and everyone knew it.
- **Just because someone hears the truth, it doesn't mean they will accept it.**

SEEKING MEN'S FAVOR

Festus heard the truth but sought favor from the accusers.

- He couldn't convict, but maybe he could send Paul back to Jerusalem and let the Sanhedrin handle him.
- But, that would require Paul's permission.
- Paul had options, and took the opportunity to let his position be known.

PAUL'S APPEAL

Paul seems to get wound up and even calls out Festus by pointing out that he knew very well that Paul was not guilty.

- Paul's goal isn't to escape death; it is to go where God was sending him: Rome.
- His appeal to Caesar wouldn't just keep him alive, it would get him to Rome.
- It would work, but not without more conversation and a difficult journey.

VISITORS (ACTS 25:13-22)

AGRIPPA AND BERNICE

Agrippa was the son of the Herod, who killed James, and the great-grandson of Herod the Great, who plotted to kill infant Jesus.

- Bernice was Agrippa's sister and also the sister of Drusilla, wife of Felix, the former governor. (What a family!)
- These visitors had no power over the proceedings, but Festus had hoped to get some help with his difficult situation.

PAUL'S CASE

After a few days together, Festus presents Paul's case to the king.

- He lays out the sequence of events. He had expected to hear of Paul's horrific evils, but the case turned out to be one of religious disagreement about a certain Jesus, a dead man Paul claimed to be alive.
- Not being familiar with Jewish teachings, he confessed that he was at a loss.

AGRIPPA'S CURIOSITY

Since Paul had appealed to Caesar, Festus was keeping him in custody until he could send him away.

- Agrippa's curiosity was piqued and he requested to hear directly from Paul.
- Festus makes a promise that Agrippa will hear from Paul the next day, but not before Festus can grandstand his position in front of the leaders of the city.

AUDIENCE (ACTS 25:23-27)

WITH GREAT POMP

The room is filled with influential people and their entourage as Agrippa and Bernice enter to hear Paul's testimony.

- Then, Festus gives the command for Paul to be brought in.
- Luke creates an image of grandeur and luxury that stands in contrast to Paul, the lone prisoner standing in front of this proud, powerful crowd. Paul *looked* defeated.

EXAGGERATION

As Festus begins to introduce Paul, he states that the WHOLE Jewish community had appealed to him concerning Paul.

- He also plays the victim by stating that he found nothing deserving of death, but Paul is the one who appealed to the emperor.
- Poor Festus is between a rock and a hard place. He knows Paul is innocent but he wants to be friends with Paul's haters.

ASKING FOR HELP

Festus declares that he has created this whole event so that everyone, especially King Agrippa can hear Paul's story.

- As the one responsible for sending Paul to Rome for trial, Festus knows that there must be a charge against him, or this whole thing is an unreasonable mess.
- Maybe, Agrippa will have some insight.
- Paul's future seems to hang in the balance.

HANGING IN THERE

- At times, we feel like we're just "hanging in there."
- **Unfortunately, lies and sin do the same.**
- **When we face the battles of life, we can become weary and believe that there is no way to truly win. We look defeated. We live defeated.**

FREQUENT BATTLES

- We don't win every battle.
- **But we do win battles!**
- **Our problem is we focus on the losses, not the wins. We focus on other people's "victories" and not our own. We focus on the enemies' power and not God's. Do we have a better understanding of Satan's plan than God's plan?**

WE ARE NOT ALONE

- We don't fight these battles alone.
- **We don't lose these battles alone.**
- **God has given Himself to be with us in these battles. He has given us each other. We don't just win and lose our own battles: we win and celebrate together; we lose, grieve, then recover together. It may seem that Paul was standing alone; he was not. The Holy Spirit was with him, and the church was praying for him. His journey wasn't over and neither is ours. So, how will we fight this week? Will we live defeat to defeat, or victory to victory?**