

Acts 25

Brief review of recent people in the book of Acts:

1. Ananias (*Acts 23.3*) – high priest at this time
2. Claudius Lysias (*Acts 23.27*) – Roman commander who arranged for Paul to avoid the assassins
3. Tertullus (*Acts 24.2-3*) – Lawyer hired by the Jews to prosecute Paul
4. Felix (*Acts 24.26*) – Roman governor over Judea; evil and cunning
5. Drusilla – (*Acts 24.24*) - his wife whom he seduced from a foreign king
6. Festus – (*Acts 24.27*) – replacement governor for Felix

Notice the references to a certain hand gesture made by Peter and Paul in *Acts*:

- Acts 12.17*- by Peter
- Acts 13.16* – Paul at Antioch of Pisidia
- Acts 21.40*- Paul before the Jewish mob
- Acts 26.1*- Paul before Agrippa
- This is very interesting from a public speaker's point of view
- Some public speakers have certain mannerisms that they are known for
- The great preacher V. E. Howard used to pause in the middle of making a point and very softly say, "Are you listening?"
- All who were privileged to hear brother Howard preach (on the International Gospel Hour) will never forget that dramatic statement he made in his sermons
- The collection of his sermons is entitled *Are You Listening?*
- Maybe Peter and Paul had a similar mannerism that they used to get everyone's attention

Acts 25.1-5

V1 – Nero made Festus governor of the province in 60 A.D.

- He was a better government official than Felix

V2 – Paul considered it a great honor to present his case and the gospel of Christ to King Agrippa

V3 – The Jewish leaders were still trying to prosecute Paul – They would never give up

- Wonder what ever happened to the assassins who vowed not to eat until Paul was killed?**
- We can tell that the Jews of the First Century were stubborn people

V4 – Probably Festus was informed of the plot

- Who informed Claudius Lysias?** Paul's nephew (*Acts 23.16*)

V5 – **Who were the influential men?** Members of the Sanhedrin

- Notice that Festus did not give in to the request of the Jews

Acts 25.6-12

V6 – The "judgment seat" – a symbol of Roman authority (Pilate and *Matt. 27.19*)

-In the last two years Paul had spoken before:

- The mob on the steps of the fort
- The Sanhedrin in Jerusalem
- Before Felix

- Before Felix and Drusilla
- Now before Festus
- Soon before Agrippa

V 7 – Review of the charges:

1. He is a pest
2. He stirs up dissension
3. He is the ringleader of the Nazarenes
4. He desecrated the temple by bringing Trophimus into it

V 8 – **How did Paul defend himself?** He had not violated the Law of Moses or the temple or the Roman government

V 9 – **How did Festus try to please the Jews?** By offering Paul the option of going to Jerusalem for trial (where he would surely be condemned and executed)

V 10 – All Roman citizens had the right of appeal

V 11 – **How did Paul know that he would see Rome?** A vision from the Lord in *Acts 23.11*

V 12 – The council = our modern day "cabinet"

- Caesar (from which we get the word Czar)
- Who was the Caesar at this time?** Nero

Nero – Summary of his reign:

- The Golden Age during the first 5 years of his rule (54-59 A.D.)
- But he began to change into an evil, insane person
- In 64 A.D., he began the persecution of Christians
- Bible scholars believe that Paul appeared before Nero in about 63 A.D. and was freed
- In 64 A.D. Nero started a fire in Rome and blamed it on the Christians
- Then he killed his wife and two close advisors (including Seneca)
- Nero committed suicide in 68 A.D.
- Paul is believed to have been killed in late 66 or early 67 A.D.

Acts 25.13-22

V 13 – King Herod Agrippa II (son of Agrippa I – *Acts 12.21-23*)

- How did Agrippa I die?** A horrible death because of killing the apostle James (eaten by worms when he took the glory of God upon himself)
- Bernice (his sister) was the half-sister of Drusilla, the wife of Felix
- Congratulations to Festus on his new appointment

V 14-22 – **Is this a fairly accurate account of what Festus did?** Yes

V 19 – The real issue: disagreement over religion

- Very similar to *Acts 18.17* – Remember Gallio at Corinth who was really not interested

Acts 25.23-27

V 23 – Location? Caesarea Philippi

- "amid great pomp" (in contrast to the apostle Paul who was a prisoner in chains)

- This shows satire on the part of Luke – a VIP audience versus a man of God

Great comments on *Acts 16.23*:

New International Commentary on Acts, F. F. Bruce, p. 484:

Next day, then, an audience was held, and it was attended not only by Agrippa and his sister and Festus, but by members of the procurator's staff and leading citizens of Caesarea. There is probably quiet humor in Luke's description of the "great pomp" with which they assembled; Luke had a very true sense of values, and knew that in his friend and teacher Paul there was a native greatness which did not need to be decked with the trappings of grandeur that surrounded his distinguished hearers. History has vindicated Luke's perspective. Most people nowadays who know anything about Agrippa and Bernice and Festus know of them as people who for a brief space of their lives crossed the path of Paul and heard him speak words which might have brought much blessing to them had they been disposed to pay serious heed to them. All these Very Important People would have been greatly surprised and not a little scandalized had they been able to foresee the relative estimates that later generations would form of them and of the handcuffed Jew who stood before them to plead his cause.

V 24 – The background as to why Paul was now appearing before King Agrippa

V 25 – Reminder of what?

- *Luke 23.22* – Pilate said the same of Jesus

- *Acts 23.29* – The same was said in the letter of Claudius Lysias

V 26 – But Festus had no concrete evidence that Paul had done anything wrong

V 27 – Festus still doesn't understand the true conflict here between good and evil; he is confused and is dumping the case on Agrippa

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