

Acts 25-26: Paul's Trial's Continue

I. Paul Before Festus (25:1-12)

A. Paul's Trials Begin Again (1-5)

1. The Case Against Paul Is Revived (1-2a)

a. Festus Visits Jerusalem (1)

- i. Nero recalled Felix as governor
- ii. Festus, the new governor arrives and makes an inaugural visit to Jerusalem – a major city in his new province

b. Festus Hears The Case Against Paul (2a)

- i. The Jewish leaders didn't wasn't any time
- ii. Their first order of business was to bring the case against Paul to the new governor's attention
- iii. Because he was a new governor, he probably wanted to appease these leaders of the people

2. The Plot Against Paul Continues (2b-5)

a. Festus is Urged to Bring Paul to Jerusalem (3)

- i. The Jews wanted Festus to bring Paul to Jerusalem
- ii. They wanted a favor from him
- iii. They were planning to ambush and kill Paul just like before
 - Funny they want Paul to uphold the law of Moses but they are more than willing to break it in order to protect their system

b. Festus Intends to Go To Caesarea (4)

- i. Festus is going back to caesarea
- ii. Caesarea was the seat of government in the Roman province of Syria (which included Judea)

c. Festus Invites The Jews To Trial in Caesarea (5)

- i. He invites the men of authority to go to Caesarea and take part in Paul's trial
- ii. He says that if Paul had done any wrong, Festus will hear the charges
- iii. Festus might be smarter than they think – at least he isn't ready to give a verdict without hearing the case

B. Paul's Case is Heard Again (6-9)

1. Paul is Brought Before Festus (6)

- a. Paul is the first item of business when Festus returns to Caesarea
- b. Festus takes his judicial seat, which means the trial has begun and the case will now be heard
- c. We must also assume that Festus familiarized himself with the case by reading the letter from Lysias

2. The Arguments Before Festus Summarized (7-8)
 - a. The Un-provable Accusations Are Heard (7)
 - i. The Jews stood around him – it sounds like they were hovering around him as they spoke
 - ii. Luke simply summarizes their statements by saying they gave accusations they couldn't prove
 - These are probably the same accusations they brought before Felix
 - Defiling the Temple, causing riots, ringleader of this sect, etc.
 - Once again we are told they can't prove anything
 - b. Paul Rejects the Accusations Against Him (8)
 - i. Once again Paul denies the accusations
 - ii. He has committed no crime against the law of the Jews
 - He has not violated the Mosaic law (remember the initial accusation was that he was teaching people to forsake Moses)
 - We have already seen that Paul has not abandoned the law or encouraged others to do so. With every defense, he proclaims his adherence to the God of Israel.
 - iii. He has committed no crime against the Temple –
 - the riot wasn't his doing, he was simply taken. He was there to worship
 - iv. He has committed no crime against Caesar
 - He is not guilty of any Roman law
 - He incited no riots or rebellion
3. Paul is Offered a Trial in Jerusalem (9)
 - a. Wanting to please the Jews, Festus asks if Paul wants to be tried in Jerusalem
 - b. Paul, however, is a Roman and cannot be subject to a native religious court without his assent.

C. Paul Appeals To Rome (10-12)

1. Paul Seeks Only A Fair Hearing (10)
 - a. Paul says He Belongs in A Roman Court (10a)
 - i. Paul knows he won't receive anything close to a fair trial if he is turned over to the Jews
 - ii. He is a Roman citizen and deserves to be tried by Roman law
 - iii. Paul knew that in a Roman court, the Jews couldn't prove anything because all the charges were of a religious nature
 - b. Paul Claims Festus Knows He is Innocent (10b)

- i. Paul asserts that even Festus knows that the charges are all ridiculous
 - ii. Paul claims that by even asking this, Festus can't give him a fair trial either. He wants to please the Jews
 - 2. Paul Invokes His Roman Citizenship Rights (11)
 - a. Paul would accept punishment if he was guilty (11a)
 - b. Paul should not be given to the Jews if he is innocent (11b)
 - c. Paul Appeals his case to Caesar (11c)
 - i. Now all bets are off
 - ii. Paul will go to Caesar to be tried
 - iii. This was a right of every Roman citizen if they so desired (however, many didn't invoke it because the Caesar's were notoriously unstable – especially Nero)
 - 3. Paul's Request is Granted by Festus (12)
 - a. Festus is let off the hook with the Jews because he cannot be blamed if Paul is released
 - b. Festus also cannot be held responsible for executing Paul when he knows he isn't guilty
 - c. Festus has the best of both worlds
- II. Paul Before Herod Agrippa Part 1 (25:13-27)
 - A. NOTE: Herod Agrippa II – Ruled over north Palestine from around 50 A.D. He was given authority over the Temple and the selection of high priests. He was given the throne by the Ceasars (Claudius, and later Nero). He is called king, but he was still subject to the Roman government. Bernice is his sister, the older sister of Druscilla (Felix's wife). Agrippa's expertise was used by the Romans in matters of Jewish traditions and customs.
 - B. Herod Agrippa Arrives in Caesarea (13)
 - C. Festus' Report To Herod Agrippa (14-21)
 - 1. Festus Reports That Paul's Case is Left Over From Felix (14)
 - 2. Festus Reports His Fair Treatment of Paul (15-17)
 - a. The Jewish Leaders Wanted Him Condemned (15)
 - b. Festus Says He Stood Up for Paul's Rights (16)
 - i. He knew Roman law provided that an accused criminal could face their accusers
 - c. Festus Says He Expedited Paul's Case (17)
 - i. It would have been within his right to postpone
 - D. Festus's Report of Paul's Hearing (18-21)
 - 1. The Charges Against Paul Are Purely Religious (18-19)
 - a. They didn't bring any charge Festus thought was a worthy "evil" crime.
 - b. Instead they only talked about religious things and disputes over Jewish traditions
 - 2. Paul Was Asked If He would Be Tried in Jerusalem (20)

- a. Festus is trying to set Paul up here
- b. He wants to do good to the Jewish leadership under his government so they will look favorably upon him
- c. He also knows that Paul must go to Jerusalem willingly
- 3. Paul Has Appealed To Caesar (21)
 - a. Paul has appealed to Caesar so he must go to Rome
 - b. The trial before Agrippa does not affect that at all – no matter what Agrippa find, Paul will still go to Rome
 - c. Festus is hoping Agrippa will shed some light on the Jews' charges against Paul so he will have something to include in his letter to Caesar. He must send some reason for Paul going to Caesar's court. Jewish tradition won't be enough.

E. Paul Appears Before Agrippa (22-23)

- 1. Festus' Introduction of Paul (24-27)
 - a. This is The Man The Jews Condemned (24)
 - b. This is the Man Who Appealed To Caesar (25)
 - c. This is the Man I can Find No Charge Against (26a)
 - d. This is the Man Festus Needs Help Evaluating (26b-27)
 - i. Festus needs something to write in the letter to Caesar
 - ii. Festus knows its not good to send him to Rome without charges

III. Paul Before Herod Agrippa Part 2 (26)

A. Paul is Given The Floor To Speak (1)

B. Paul's Defense Before Agrippa (2-23)

- 1. Introduction (2-3)
 - a. Paul is Happy Herod is Hearing the Case (2-3a)
 - i. Agrippa is familiar with Jewish customs and Jewish law
 - ii. Agrippa will understand the intricacies of what Paul is accused of
 - iii. Agrippa will understand the reality of Paul's testimony because it is rooted in the Jewish Scriptures
 - b. Paul Asks Herod For Patience in Listening (3b)
- 2. Paul's Background (4-11)
 - a. Paul has always been a strict Pharisee (4-5)
 - i. They all know of Paul's reputation as a Pharisee
 - ii. Pharisees were the most strict sect of the Jews. They took God's will as revealed in the law and prophets more seriously than any other group. They taught and studied God's law with great devotion
 - b. Paul claims he is condemned for teaching the fulfillment of Israel's hope (6-8)
 - i. I am accused because of my hope in God (6a)
 - Paul still takes God's word seriously

- Paul still worships the God of their fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob)
 - Paul is on trial because he hopes in the promises that Israel's God has made.
 - Paul's message has not changed – The hope of the resurrection which is proclaimed throughout the Jewish Scriptures has now been fulfilled in Jesus. The promises to Israel's fathers have been accomplished.
 - The restoration of perfected Israel has arrived in the death, burial, and resurrection.
- ii. I hold the same hope that Israel does (7)
- By using the phrase “the twelve tribes” Paul is pointing to the ultimate regathering promise made to Israel
 - There were lots of people in Israel who had no idea which tribe they were from. There were Jews dispersed all over the world
 - In Jesus, God has gathered his people together and given them perfect salvation and promise.
- iii. My view should not be incredible to any (8)
- Everyone in attendance (except the Romans) understood and believed that God indeed raises the dead and that there is a promise of redemption
 - Paul's view should not be seen as incredible or outlandish. He is simply pointing to the fulfillment of what has always been foretold.
- c. Paul was a vicious opponent of the Church (9-11)
- i. I opposed Jesus (9)
- ii. I imprisoned and helped execute believers (10)
- iii. I punished and persecuted believers (11)
- As Paul recounts his history against the church, notice what he says about causing the believers to blaspheme.
 - How did Paul cause them to blaspheme? Here, he equates the charge of blasphemy with denouncing Jesus. Paul implies that to speak against Jesus is to blaspheme the God of Israel himself.
3. Paul's Conversion (12-18)
- a. Jesus Appeared to Paul (12-15)
- i. A light appeared on the road to Damascus (12-13)
- ii. A voice asks why Paul is persecuting him (14)
- iii. Jesus reveals himself to Paul (15)

- b. Jesus Commissions Paul (16-18)
 - i. Paul commanded to Rise (16a)
 - ii. Paul is called to be a witness (16b)
 - Paul is divinely commissioned to testify to what he has seen and what he will see Jesus do.
 - iii. Paul's witness to be used to save all men (17-18)
 - Paul is told that the Gentiles are now included in the salvation and promises of God.
 - God will give the Gentiles a lot (a share) in his promise to Israel.
 - 4. Paul's Conclusion (19-23)
 - a. Obedience to God is Paul's Only Offense (19-22a)
 - i. Paul obeyed his heavenly vision (19-20)
 - Paul has obeyed God rather than man
 - Paul has testified to the Gentiles and Jews that they should repent, and bring forth fruit of repentance
 - Paul has proclaimed the gospel of salvation (which includes repentance in Paul's view)
 - ii. This testimony is why he was arrested (21)
 - This testimony is why all these trials have come about
 - Notice here that Paul, for the first time, reveals that they seized him and tried to kill him – there was no arrest or trial attempted by the Jews
 - iii. God has helped Paul through everything (22a)
 - Paul has been protected by God's providence through all of this.
 - b. Paul Proclaims The Testimony Before This Court (22b-23)
 - i. Finally, Paul gives the reason that he is testifying before Agrippa today
 - ii. He is here to proclaim to great and small the truth and gospel of Jesus
 - iii. He is proclaiming what Moses and the prophets said would come to pass. God has always said salvation would go to all the nations (See. Isa. 42:6; 49:6; 60:1-3)
 - C. Paul's Real Intention (24-32)
 - 1. Paul Appeals to Agrippa's Knowledge (24-27)
 - a. Festus calls Paul crazy (24)
 - b. Paul is Aware that Agrippa knows of these things (25-26)
 - i. Paul declares that he is not crazy and that his message is reasonable and true.

- ii. Agrippa has heard of all this – Jesus and his ministry was not done in a corner. All of Judea knows who He is
 - iii. How can Paul be a secret ringleader when all of this is public knowledge?
 - c. Paul affirms Agrippa's understanding of the Jewish prophets (27)
 - i. Paul has connected his message with the prophets of Israel
 - ii. The king understands that the prophets foretold of a coming Messiah.
 - iii. Because of Paul's testimony, Paul thinks Agrippa should believe in Jesus
 - iv. Agrippa is now faced with a tough decision
 - He cannot deny the prophets and lose his reputation as being loyal to Judaism
 - He cannot agree with Paul who is seen as a ringleader of a heretical sect by the Jews
- 2. Paul's Defense Was Meant To Convert (28-29)
 - a. Agrippa wonders at Paul's Intentions (28)
 - i. "Almost" – This statement is strange
 - ii. It most probably means "How do you think you can convert me to Christianity in such a short time?" This is seen from Paul's response to Agrippa
 - iii. Agrippa seems perplexed that Paul would spend this time trying to convert him rather than making a defense of himself in order to get off the hook.
 - b. Paul Affirms His Intentions (29)
 - i. Paul affirms that he is trying to convert not only Agrippa but all those who are standing in the court listening
 - ii. He wants them all to be a Christian as he is, except for the chains that he wears.
- 3. Paul Will Still Go To Rome (30-32)
 - a. Herod Recognizes Paul's Innocence (30-31)
 - i. The highest rulers of the region have all recognized that Paul is innocent and they have all heard the truth of the gospel
 - ii. Matt. 10:18 "And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles."
 - b. Paul must still go to Caesar (32)
 - i. Paul could have been let go if he had not appealed to Caesar

- ii. Paul has spent this time, not trying to get out of going to Rome – but trying to preach the gospel and convert his hearers.