

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

LESSON 28: CHAPTERS 25-26

11 December 2015

- Vss. 1-5** Paul has been in bonds for two years. Festus had been Governor for three days and decided to travel to Jerusalem. The Jews there requested that Festus judge Paul in Jerusalem. This was just another attempt to kill Paul. Festus agreed to put Paul on trial, but not in Jerusalem. The Jews would have to send accusers to Caesarea, for he would conduct the trial there.
- Vss. 6-7** About two weeks later Paul was on trial in Caesarea. The Jews did their best to accuse Paul, but they had no proof. This is similar to what happened to Jesus (Mark 15:3, Luke 23:2, Luke 23:10, Mt. 26:59).
- Vss. 8-12** When Paul denied the charges against him, Festus suggested that he go to Jerusalem to be judged. He knew Paul was innocent, but he didn't want to offend the Jewish voters.
- Paul's answer: "I haven't done any wrong to the Jews. If I had, I would accept death. But since they have no proof against me, and since I'm a Roman citizen, you can't send me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar"
- The Bible gives precedence for the use of Capital punishment before the Law (Gen. 9:6), under the Law (Exod. 21:12), and under grace (Acts 25:11). The death penalty is biblically supported.
- Vss. 13-22** King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to visit Festus. Festus used this visit as an opportunity to "declare Paul's cause unto the king." He told the king how he'd heard the accusations, but they were not what he expected (vs. 18); they were matters of Jewish "superstition" (vs. 19) and concerned Paul's teachings about the resurrection of a man named Jesus. Agrippa wanted to hear Paul himself (vs. 22).
- Vss. 23-27** Paul is brought before Agrippa and Bernice. Festus gives the opening statement, explaining Paul's predicament and the Jew's desire to have him killed. He hopes that after this hearing, he'll know what crimes to charge Paul with. As of yet, there is "**no certain thing**" (vs. 26) that he can accuse Paul of; nothing he's heard so far could be counted as a crime.
- Jesus' only crime was that he was "**The King of the Jews**" (Jn. 19:19). Pilate could not write anything but the truth. And Festus doesn't want to send Paul to Rome without an actual crime to report.

CHAPTER 26

- Vss. 1-8** Paul is happy for the opportunity to speak to the king about Jesus. He knows that Agrippa is knowledgeable about Jewish customs (vs. 3). Paul states that all twelve Jewish tribes still existed in his day (vs. 7), which refutes the opinion that TEN tribes were lost in Jeremiah's day and that Europeans are descendants of those tribes (British Israelism). Paul stated that Jews of every tribe looked for the fulfillment of God's promise, that he "**should raise the dead**" (vs. 8) (see Ezekiel 37:12 for example). Paul is accused of teaching the fulfillment of that promise (vs. 7). Paul tells the king that it should not seem incredible that God (the Creator) can raise the dead.

- Vs. 9** Paul begins his testimony here. This verse makes a good sermon outline:
- “**I:**” The Wrong Person is in view.
 - “**Thought:**” Intellectual Knowledge Can’t Save You.
 - “**Within myself:**” Many unsaved men make this mistake (Luke 12:17-18, Luke 18:11). You need to consult somebody smarter than yourself.
 - “**Ought to:**” Serving Religion out of Duty—instead of serving GOD out of Love.
 - “**To Do:**” Man wants to DO. GOD wants man to BE. (Be Born again, saved, redeemed).
 - “**Many Things:**” Man tries to do many things to get to God. God tells us “**One thing is needful**” (Luke 10:41-42) and “**This ONE THING I do**” (Philippians 3:13). Do ONE thing: turn to Jesus.
 - “**Contrary to the Name:**” before you’re saved, you’re kicking against the pricks (Acts 9:5, 26:14) going against the name of Jesus. After you’re saved, you gladly proclaim that name.
- Vss. 10-18** Paul persecuted the saints severely. —He was on his way to Damascus to bring more Christians to judgment when Christ appeared “above the brightness of the sun” and appointed him to be a witness (vs. 16) and promising to protect him (vs. 17) as he opens people’s eyes, turns them to the light, frees them from Satan’s power, and shows them how to receive forgiveness of sins, an inheritance, and sanctification “by faith” (vs. 18).
- Vs. 19** Paul was not disobedient. He was no longer a child of disobedience (Eph. 2:2, Col. 3:6). Saved people are called “obedient children” (1 Pet. 1:14).
- Vs. 20** Paul began to minister to both Jews and Gentiles, showing them that they should repent (turn from sin; turn to God) and produce some good works that prove they’ve done it.
- Vs. 21-23** Paul’s witnessing was the reason the Jews wanted to kill him (vs. 21), but God protected him and he continues to witness (vs. 22), saying (as the prophets prophesied) that Christ should suffer and rise from the dead (vs. 23).
- Vss. 24-32** Festus interrupted Paul to tell him he’s crazy (vs. 24). Paul calmly assures Festus that he is in his right mind and speaks the truth (vs. 25), as the king knows (vs. 26).
- King Agrippa told Paul that he was almost persuaded to be a Christian (vs. 28). Many commentators suggest that Agrippa said this sarcastically, but don’t forget that Paul told Agrippa, “**I know that thou believest**” (vs. 27) the prophets. Agrippa was at the door of salvation—and he walked away from it. Paul’s response in verse 29 confirms that Agrippa was not mocking. Paul wants him to go all the way to saving faith. “Almost” isn’t good enough.
- “**Except these bonds.**” Paul was in chains, but he was the only free man there!
- Paul was declared innocent by Agrippa, Bernice, and Festus (vs. 30), but he appealed to Caesar, so he’ll have to go to Rome.