

October 16, 2022

“Affirming Jesus Is Alive”
Acts 25:1-27

Prel Rmks

LOGW

Moving faster ...

But life was not moving faster for Paul ...

Acts 24:27 But **after two years** Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound.

21-24 = 12 days Now in a single verse = 2 years

(1) Now when Festus had come to the province, after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. **(2)** Then the high priest and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they petitioned him, **(3)** asking a favor against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem—while *they* lay in ambush along the road to kill him. **(4)** But Festus answered that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself was going *there* shortly. **(5)** "Therefore," he said, "let those who have authority among you go down with *me* and accuse this man, to see if there is any fault in him." **(6)** And when he had remained among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day, sitting on the judgment seat, he commanded Paul to be brought. **(7)** When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove, **(8)** while he answered for himself, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all." **(9)** But

Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things?" **(10)** So Paul said, "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. **(11)** For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar." **(12)** Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, "You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!" **(13)** And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice **(sister to Drusilla, the wife of Felix – AND, she was Agrippa's brother: scandalous)** came to Caesarea to greet Festus. **(14)** When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying: "There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix, **(15)** about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him. **(16)** To them I answered, 'It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.' **(17)** Therefore when they had come together, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in. **(18)** When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed, **(19)** but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. **(20)** And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters. **(21)** But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, **(not a name, but a title = revered, one to be worshipped – Nero)** I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar." **(22)** Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I also would

like to hear the man myself." "Tomorrow," he said, "you shall hear him." **(23)** So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in. **(24)** And Festus said: "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer. **(25)** But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him. **(26)** I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write. **(27)** For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him."

(Prayer)

INTRODUCTION

Often when you study a portion of God's Word, it is helpful to take a step back and look at the big picture and ask why God included it in His Word to us.

We might have summarized 24, 25, 26 in a sentence and just moved on ...

God obviously wants us to see something in these chapters ...

What do we see?

The great Apostle being held in custody for 2 years.

Life had been action packed.

12 days – full of action and suspense and intrigue –
adrenalin-flowing days ...

Days of a great demonstration of God's providence and
sovereign control of events and circumstances and people

The orchestration of events and circumstances

God's direct intervention to protect Paul and work out His
will for Paul's life.

But then – 2 years of no real forward progress

It must have been very difficult for a man like Paul

He was innocent, and yet he had to languish in confinement
day after day for 2 full years POLITICS 24:27

What was Paul's attitude during this time?

**What was his focus as he went through days like
those? Did he lose focus?**

Is that why God included this in His Word?

For those seasons of life when things are not going the way
we would like them to go? –

When things aren't going our way

When we seem to be throttled and thwarted from
moving ahead and we almost seem to be going in
circles.

Here in our text, God sets before us those kind of days in the life of Paul –

What do we need to see in our text today?

The New Governor 1-6

The New Trial 7-12

The New Arrivals 13-27

The new arrivals set the stage for what we will see next week.

I. The New Governor 1-6

Felix was recalled by Nero ...

Festus did seem to be a man of decisive action, especially when compared to Felix ...

Paul may have become hopeful there would be a break in the case.

Those Jewish religious leaders may have become hopeful that they might finally see this pestilent fellow Paul done away with ...

3 days in office → Jerusalem ... v. 1

(1) Now when Festus had come to the province, after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

The Jewish religious leaders still hated Paul with great fervor and intensity. They still wanted to kill him ... made a request of Festus ...

(2) Then the high priest and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they petitioned him, (3) asking a favor against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem — while they lay in ambush along the road to kill him. There is no indication that Festus knew of their plan.

Festus showed some strength as a leader and denied their request ...

(4) But Festus answered that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself was going there shortly.

(5) "Therefore," he said, "let those who have authority among you go down with me and accuse this man, to see if there is any fault in him." (6) And when he had remained among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea.

And you see that he was not a procrastinator like Felix:

And **the next day**, sitting on the judgment seat, he commanded Paul to be brought.

The New Governor

Paul had new hope that things would not continue to drag on

Those Jewish religious leaders who hated Paul so much, had renewed hope they could soon see his demise

II. The New Trial 7-12

This was a replay of the trial before Felix as far as the substance of the case is concerned.

(7) When he had come, **the Jews** who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and **laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove,**

Paul made his defense again refuting the 3 main charges that were lodged against him:

(8) while he answered for himself, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all."

Festus asked Paul if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and have a final disposition of the case.

(9) **But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor,** answered Paul and said, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and **there be judged before me** concerning these things?"

Paul saw right through that suggestion. He had more sense than that! That would have been a change of venue in reverse!

(10) So Paul said, "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. **(11)** For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, **no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar.**"

(12) Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council **(with his advisors)**, answered, "You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!"

**The New Governor
The New Trial**

Finally after 2 years things seemed to be moving ahead again.

III. The New Arrivals 13-27

(13) And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus.

King Agrippa 2

The great grandson Herod the Great

The son of Herod Agrippa 1

Chptr. 12 – The one who killed James

Chptr. 12 – He was struck by an angel and eaten by worms when he refused to give the glory to God when he was being worshipped as a God in Caesarea by the people of Tyre and Sidon.

Brother of Drusilla, the wife of Felix

He was the ruler over a small kingdom in the northeast of Israel:

Rome allowed him to retain the title of King

He also, by arrangement had authority over the Temple in Jerusalem

He was the one who appointed the High Priest

But he was actually subordinate to Festus

Bernice

Sister of Drusilla, the wife of Felix

Great scandal: Agrippa's sister – incestuous relationship

They came to give their greetings to the new governor. POLITICAL

(14) When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king,

Festus brought Agrippa up to speed about Paul's case

He told him about how the Jewish religious leaders had asked for him to be brought to Jerusalem and put on trial

And how he had refused

saying: "There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix, **(15)** about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him. **(16)** To them I answered, 'It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.'

The Roman legal system had certain rules in place to protect its citizens and this was certainly in Paul's favor

Festus then told Agrippa about the trial that had been held before him:

(17) Therefore when they had come together, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in. (18) When the accusers stood up, they brought **no accusation against him of such things as I supposed, (19) but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.**

He told Agrippa about how he couldn't discern the truth about these religious matters and offered Paul the opportunity to be judged in Jerusalem and how Paul had appealed to Caesar.

(20) And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters. (21) But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar."

(22) Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I also would like to hear the man myself."

We see again, Festus, acting quickly and decisively:
"Tomorrow," he said, "you shall hear him."

(23) So the next day,
They gather for really what amounted to a show trial so King Agrippa could hear Paul's case:

when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in.

Festus gives opening remarks to all who were gathered:

(24) And Festus said: "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer.

Look at the conclusion Festus had reached:

(25) But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him.

Festus: "I don't even have any credible written indictments against Paul to forward to Caesar's court when I send him to Rome."

(26) I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write.

(27) For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him."

Sets the stage for Paul's defense before King Agrippa, which we will see next Sunday.

Conclusion

1. God Kept Paul Focused

Meetings with Felix and Drusilla

24:24 – Paul spoke concerning faith in Jesus Christ

No doubt he spoke to the Roman guards who guarded him – we know from other places in Scripture that is the kind of thing Paul did

Spoke to other visitors about Christ

In our text today:

25:19 – Paul affirmed Jesus to be alive

With his words

With his life

His entire life was an affirmation that Jesus is alive

Isn't that what we want for our lives?

If we are going to have it – God will have to do a work to keep us focused.

2. God was at work in Paul's life

Paul may have felt like his life was on hold and precious time was being wasted – 2 long years had gone by

Certainly to outside observers it would have seemed that way

But God was at work:

His plan for Paul's life was moving forward right on time.

When Paul was asleep, God was at work.

He moved one governor out of office

He moved another governor into office

All at the perfect time for Paul to finally make his way to Rome

Where he would continue to affirm that Jesus is alive.

But before he begins the journey to Rome, there's one final hearing in which he has to appear and defend himself –

So next week, we'll see Paul's defense before Agrippa in Chapter 26