**Acts of the Apostles
A Study of New Testament History**
**Lesson 20
Acts 24:1 – 25:27**

**Paul Appears Before Felix and Festus**

**Introduction:**

When the apostle Paul appears before the governor Felix he makes a passionate defense against the charges leveled against him. Those charges include being "a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5). In addition, Paul was charged once again with having defiled the temple. However, according to Paul, his accusers "neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city" (Acts 24:12). Paul did freely admit to being a follower of Jesus Christ who had been resurrected from the dead. Therefore, Felix decides to postpone any decision until Lysias the commander comes to testify. This allowed Paul a certain amount of freedom, and an opportunity to receive visitors and friends.

When Felix and his wife Drusilla (who was Jewish) asked to hear Paul speak again, "he reason about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come" (Acts 24:25a). Felix was terrified by the things Paul said, and asked that the apostle "Go away for now; when I have a more convenient time I will call for you" (Acts 24:25b). Felix had hoped Paul would offer a bribe for his freedom, but when that failed to materialize, Felix seemed to befriend Paul and talked with him often over the next two years.

Felix was eventually replaced as governor by Porcius Festus. Wanting to appease to the Jews, Festus refused to grant Paul's freedom. Meanwhile, the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem asked Festus to bring Paul back to Jerusalem to answer the charges against him in their courts. Their plan, however, was to ambush Paul before he arrived and kill him once and for all. Instead, Festus insisted that Paul's accusers to come to Caesarea to state their case. And when they arrived, the once again accused Paul of things they could not prove. Festus knew the Jews wanted to adjudicate this matter in Jerusalem, and so he asked Paul if he would have any issues with going there to answer for himself. However, Paul knew this would most likely result in his untimely death, and therefore appealed to have his case heard by Caesar himself in Rome.

Since Festus would need to have the charges against Paul well documented and clarified, he asks for King Agrippa and Bernice to hear Paul's defense of the charges brought against him.

**Memorization:**

Acts 24:25 – *Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."*

**Key Events of Acts 24:1 - 25:27**

* Paul appears before Felix
* Felix delays judgment for two years
* Paul appeals to Caesar
* Paul appears before King Agrippa

**Link to Online Bible Study Tools:**

These websites contain numerous Bible Versions and Translations, Concordances, Dictionaries, Lexicons and many other useful tools: http://biblos.com/ and http://www.biblestudytools.com/ (Click on "Our Library" at the top of the home page)

**The Exposition:**

**I. Paul appears before Felix (Acts 24:1-27)**

**A. The charges brought against Paul (Acts 24:1-9)**

1. Who did Ananias the high priest and the elders bring to represent their case before Felix? Why do you think they selected this man?

2. How did this orator begin his speech, and why do you think he said these things?

3. What are the specific charges they made against Paul"?

4. How does Tertullus describe the purpose of the Jews for ceasing Paul in the temple, and what interrupted those plans?

**B. Paul defense before Felix (Acts 24:10-21)**

1. How does Paul acknowledge the authority of Felix?

2. What does Paul say in his defense concerning the events that took place in the temple some twelve days earlier?

3. What does Paul admit to?

4. How does Paul use "the Law" and "the Prophets" to defend his actions?

5. What does Paul say concerning the resurrection?

6. How does Paul describe his purpose for coming to Jerusalem?

7. Where did Paul say his accusers should have gone to seek legal action against him? Why do you think he said this?

8. What does Paul say is the reason for him being judged before Felix?

**C. The reaction of Felix (Acts 24:22-27)**

1. What decision did Felix make concerning these matters?

2. In the meantime, how was Paul treated?

3. Why did Felix and Drusilla ask for Paul to speak to them?

4. What was it that frightened Felix? Why do you think this troubled Felix so?

5. What did Felix say in response to Paul's sermon?

6. What advice would you give to someone who gives the same response to the message of the gospel? Why?

7. What was Felix hoping to receive from Paul?

8. How does Luke describe the on-going relationship between Felix in Paul?

**II. Paul appears before Festus (Acts 25:1-12)**

**A. Festus in Jerusalem (Acts 25:1-5)**

1. Who informed Festus about Paul?

2. What did the Jews ask Festus to do, and what was their motive?

3. How did Festus respond? Why do you think Festus made this decision?

**B. Paul appeals to Caesar (Acts 25:6-12)**

1. How long had Festus remained in Jerusalem, and what did he do immediately upon his return?

2. How does Luke describe the charges the Jews made against Paul on this occasion?

3. What did Paul say in his defense?

4. What did Festus ask of Paul? Why do you think Festus wanted to do this?

5. How did Paul respond, and why would he insist his case be tried before a Roman official?

6. What did Paul request to guarantee that his case would be tried under Roman law?

7. What was Festus' response?

**III. Paul appears before Agrippa (Acts 25:13-27)**

**A. The purpose for this occasion (Acts 25:13-21)**

1. Who is King Agrippa? (Use a Bible dictionary or other online source to answer the question)

2. Who is Bernice? (Use a Bible dictionary or other online source to answer the question).

3. What are the principle points Festus brings out concerning Paul's case?

**B. King Agrippa's reply (Acts 25:22-27)**

1. What was Agrippa's response?

2. How does Luke describe the proceedings the next day?

3. How does Festus describe the charges against Paul?

4. Had Festus found anything in Paul that made him worthy of death?

5. How does Festus describe the purpose for this meeting before Agrippa?

**Application:**Be prepared to discuss what lessons can learn from these events, and how these lessons can be applied to present-day situations.