

## Commentary on Acts chapter 25 by Chuck Smith 7.9.23

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**July memory verse Proverbs 30:5 (NKJV)** Every word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

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Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem ([Act 25:1](#)).

Ascended, and you always go up to Jerusalem, you never go down to Jerusalem. No one ever said, "Let's go down to Jerusalem." It's always, "Let's go up to Jerusalem."

Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him, and desired a favor against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, that they might lie in wait and ambush him on the way ([Act 25:2-3](#)).

Festus now has become the governor replacing Felix, and when he went up to Jerusalem, immediately the high priest, now this was a different high priest. Ananias had passed now from the scene in the intervening two years, a new high priest, but they're still so incensed against Paul that they were still plotting to kill him. So they mentioned about Paul, "Let's bring him up to Jerusalem to stand trial here." And then on the way to Jerusalem they were planning to ambush him.

But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly to Caesarea. And so he said, Let them therefore which are among you who are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there is some wickedness in him. And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day he was sitting on the judgment seat and he commanded Paul to be brought. And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and they laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove ([Act 25:4-7](#)).

One thing about Roman justice is that you had to prove your case against the man. So though they made many complaints, yet they couldn't prove any.

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While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all ([Act 25:8](#)).

I haven't offended the law; I haven't offended the temple. I haven't offended Caesar.

But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure ([Act 25:9](#)),

He had just come into office and he was wanting to get on the good side of these people, accommodating them.

answered Paul, Will you go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? ([Act 25:9](#))

At this point, Paul was tired of being a political pawn in the hands of the Roman governors, and he exercised a right of every Roman citizen. Unless he was accused of first-degree murder, rape or kidnapping.

Paul said ([Act 25:10](#)),

"Caesar appellate," the two words that any Roman citizen could utter when he felt that he was getting a raw deal in the local court.

I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as you very well know ([Act 25:10](#)).

Listen, fellow, you know that I haven't done any wrong.

For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die ([Act 25:11](#)):

I'm not afraid to die if I've done something worthy of death.

but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar ([Act 25:11](#)).

Caesar appellate, the legal phrase that could be used.

So they had a consultation and he answered, If you appeal to Caesar, unto Caesar shalt thou go ([Act 25:12](#)).

Notice Paul is ready to die for Christ. He said that to his friends on the road to Jerusalem. "What mean ye by these tears? Do you dissuade me? I'm not afraid

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to be bound. I'm ready to die for Jesus in Jerusalem." But he's not going to just recklessly give his life for nothing.

There are some people that recklessly and foolishly just expose themselves to danger. I don't believe that that is God's will or even wise.

Paul used his right of appeal.

And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to greet Festus ([Act 25:13](#)).

This is king Agrippa, Herod Agrippa II. It was his great grandfather Herod who had ordered the death of the innocent children at the time of the birth of Christ. His great uncle Herod had ordered the death of John the Baptist. His father, Herod Agrippa, had ordered the death of James that we mentioned earlier. This is Herod Agrippa II. His wife was Bernice who was also his sister. She also was a daughter of Herod Agrippa I, she was the sister also to Drusilla who was the wife of Felix. It's getting to be a mixed-up family affair here.

Bernice had originally been married to her uncle whom she divorced and married a wealthy merchantman and when Herod Agrippa met her in Rome, he enticed her to leave him and to come and live with him. So it was really a very unsavory situation that existed here between Herod Agrippa II and Bernice.

Because Festus was new in the office, a new governor, and Herod Agrippa was still the king over a portion of the province, he came to greet him.

And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man who has been left in bonds by Felix: About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him. To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before he has been able to meet his accusers face to face, and to have a licence to answer for himself concerning the crimes that he is charged with. Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the next day I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth. Against whom when the accusers stood up, they did not bring any accusation of such things as I supposed: All they had were certain questions against him of their own beliefs or superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive ([Act 25:14-19](#)).

So they were just arguing over Paul's belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him if he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters. But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar. Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. And Festus answered, Tomorrow, you will hear him ([Act 25:20-22](#)).

Festus had no jurisdiction or ruling over Paul. So it was not really a legal process. Paul had already appealed to Caesar and that's where Paul's next legal official hearing would take place. But this was just an entertainment for Herod Agrippa and his wife. It was just a big occasion to have a big time of entertainment. "We'll listen to this fellow."

However, Herod Agrippa was a student of the Jewish scriptures, and he had studied the customs and the manners of the Jews carefully so that he is interested, no doubt, in what Paul might have to say concerning Jesus Christ. As we will get into Paul's defense before Agrippa next week, this will be brought out.

So on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp ([Act 25:23](#)),

That is, they were dressed in their royal purple apparel. Festus was probably dressed in his crimson robes and, of course, there stood the legionnaires who were the tallest of the Romans, the special elite guards standing there at attention with their fancy uniforms, and the whole assembly of the notable people. It was a public occasion where the king might show off his glory, and so he comes into the arena and all of the others, and probably this was done at the arena there in Caesarea that still exists to the present day. You who have made your pilgrimage to Israel have had the privilege of sitting in that arena in Caesarea. It's always just awesome to sit there and to realize that this is probably the arena where Paul came to make his defense before Herod Agrippa. "They had come with great pomp,"

and entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, the principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth. And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, you see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any more. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself has appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him. Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination I might have somewhat to write. For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not be able to signify the crimes that he's charged with ([Act 25:23-27](#)).

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Festus had been put in a real pickle by Paul when Paul appealed to Caesar, because he was a Roman citizen, he had that right. Festus had to send him to Caesar. However, being just a political pawn and there were no real charges against him, if Paul comes to Caesar without legitimate charges, then Festus is in trouble because he hasn't been exercising his position as judge in fairness which the Roman government always sought. Fairness for the Roman citizens. And so Festus had a real problem when Paul appealed to Caesar, because there weren't any legitimate charges that he could make against Paul. And it would immediately be obvious to Caesar that Festus had failed to do his job as a governor and it would look bad for Festus.

So Festus was really glad for this occasion, because he was hoping by Agrippa's listening to Paul, they might be able to get some kind of charges that will seem to be legitimate charges against Paul when he is sent to stand before Caesar. That at least there might seem to be legitimate charges. And so this is what Festus says, "The purpose of this now is that we might formulate our charges against this man as we send him to Caesar so that we'll have the formal charges that we might make. Because it really doesn't seem right to send a prisoner and not be able to signify the crimes of which he is guilty." Festus was in big trouble, hopefully now Agrippa will help him out by being able to formulate charges against Paul.

As we get into the next chapter, we'll find out that, unfortunately for Festus, it didn't work and Agrippa just said, "You've got a problem," and let it go at that. But didn't really help in formulating any charges against Paul.

Next week, Paul's exciting defense before Agrippa. It's one of my favorite chapters in the book of Acts. There's so much here in Paul's defense before Agrippa, and I think you'll find it extremely fascinating in your study. And then we will begin to journey towards Rome with Paul in chapter twenty-seven, as he is on his way, finally, to Rome. "I must see Rome," and now he's getting on his way.

As Paul testified to Felix of righteousness, of temperance, and of judgment to come, he trembled. And he said, "I will hear you again on a more convenient day." It is not enough that you feel sorry for your sins. It is not enough that you experience the conviction of the Holy Spirit and even tremble at the thought of the judgment to come. It is necessary that you submit your life to Jesus Christ and to receive His forgiveness and cleansing. For there is to be a resurrection, both of the just and the unjust.

And "whosoever names are not found written in the Lamb's book of life will be cast into the lake burning with fire and this is the second death". Don't think that that's just someone's wild concept or superstitious belief. That is the Word of

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God--plain, powerful, and you would be wise to take heed. You would be wise not to follow the weakness of Felix who deferred making decisions. But you would be wise to make your decision tonight to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and as your Lord.

One day you're going to meet God, but if you haven't prepared by receiving Jesus Christ, it's going to be an awesome, horrible experience.

May the Lord be with you. May the Lord bless you. May the Lord keep you by His power and in His love that you might be God's instrument this week to share His love with others. That you might be a blessing to those that you come in contact with as they draw from your relationship with Jesus and are strengthened and blessed because of your walk with Him.