

Acts of the Apostles – 25

I. The Inspired History

- A. Paul Appears Before Porcius Festus (1-12).
 - 1. Festus visits Jerusalem after replacing Felix (1-5).
 - 2. Paul testifies before Festus and the Jews (6-8).
 - 3. Paul appeals to Caesar for protection (9-12)
- B. Paul Appears Before King Agrippa (13-27).
 - 1. Festus explains Paul's situation to Agrippa (13-22).
 - 2. Festus introduces Paul to Agrippa (23-27).

II. The Sense and Meaning

- A. After replacing Felix as province governor, Festus traveled to Jerusalem from Caesarea (1-5).
 - 1. The rabid Jews confront Festus directly, though more than two years have transpired.
 - a. Even though Paul is in prison, the Jews profanely crave his innocent blood.
 - b. The high priest and chief of the Jews conspire to kill Paul contrary to the law.
 - c. The wicked have hated the righteous from the time of Cain and Abel forward.
 - 2. The Lord protects Paul in Caesarea by the decision of Festus to leave him there.
- B. Paul defends himself again against the false accusations of the bloodthirsty Jews (6-8).
 - 1. There was no rest for Festus in his new office; the next day he had to judge Paul.
 - 2. As usual with the wicked and heretics, they could not prove any of their many charges.
 - a. If they cannot find one charge with proof, they multiply charges to overwhelm.
 - b. It is our duty as the sons of God to be without rebuke in this world (Phil 2:14-16; I Pet 2:11-12; 3:16; Rom 12:17; I Thess 5:22; I Tim 5:14; Titus 2:4-5,7-8).
 - c. Our Lord gave us such an example, for He had no fault in Him (John 19:4,6).
 - d. It is good to be without offence against God or the government (23:1; 24:16).
- C. Paul appealed to Caesar for protection, when Festus seeks to please the Jews (9-12).
 - 1. The Lord used the political heart of Festus to dare Paul to stand trial in Jerusalem.
 - a. Never forget that the hearts of all men are in the hand of the Lord (Prov 21:1).
 - b. The Lord could have delivered Paul from Festus, but He chose not to do so.
 - c. No wrath or sin on the part of any man ever thwarts God's will (Psalm 76:10).
 - 2. Paul boldly appealed to Caesar for protection from Festus and the Jews' conspiracy.
 - a. Paul boldly confesses he has done no wrong and would accept legal judgment.
 - b. Paul shows us, by the Holy Spirit, to use the laws to our defense when needed.
 - c. We are a registered church, and we are not ashamed to be so at this time.
 - d. Our registration allows government subsidy by tax deductibility of giving.
 - e. Should Jacob and his sons have refused financial aid from Pharaoh and Egypt?
 - f. Should David and Solomon have refused aid from Hiram, king of Tyre?
 - g. Should Nehemiah and Ezra have refused financial aid from the King of Persia?
 - h. God has ordained kings and queens to nurse his churches (Isaiah 49:23).
 - i. When our tax law subsidizes "ministers of the gospel," we should give thanks!
 - j. When our government tries to interrupt our duties to Christ, we will resist.
 - k. Consider that Paul appealed to Caesar - he was no George W. Bush.
 - l. Truth – the fruit of the Spirit – has a proper attitude toward civil authority.
 - 3. Festus and his council, bound by the higher law themselves, submitted to the appeal.
 - a. Festus could not turn him over to the Jews, for Roman law forbade it.
 - b. He would not make judgment himself, for he would displease the unruly Jews.
 - c. So he was likely pleased with this turn of events to be free of this controversy.

- D. Festus explains Paul's situation to King Agrippa, when he came into the province (13-22).
 - 1. This Agrippa is Herod Agrippa II, son and successor to the worm-eaten Herod (12:23).
 - 2. Bernice was his sister, who had married her uncle and lived with her brother in incest.
 - 3. Governor Porcius Festus tells Paul's situation from Felix to King Herod Agrippa II.
 - a. We see in his words some of the fairness of the Roman law for criminals.
 - b. Festus, profane as most Romans, calls the Jews religion a superstition, though he likely did not denigrate it too much, since Agrippa was a Jew.
 - c. Festus believed that Jesus was dead – likely by Paul's account, aggressive Jewish testimony, and readily available Roman history.
 - d. For Paul surely confessed His death, but He also affirmed His resurrection.
 - e. The matter of our Lord's resurrection is mere superstition to the natural man.
 - 4. Augustus is a term of reverence (the august one) applied to various caesars (Luke 2:1).
 - 5. Octavianus was the emperor in John's day; and Nero was the emperor at this time.
 - 6. King Agrippa asks to hear Paul himself, and Festus gives a hearing for the next day.
- E. Festus introduces Paul to Agrippa and all those present at this conspicuous hearing (23-27).
 - 1. Festus modestly admits the pressure the bloodthirsty Jews had applied already to him.
 - 2. Knowing Agrippa is better suited to examine Paul, Festus hopes to formalize a charge.