



ACCM

Bible Study: Thursday, March 23 2017.

Topic: Acts 24 and 25

INTRODUCTION: After a few days, the Jews went to Caesarea along with a lawyer called Tertullus to bring accusations against Paul. Of all they accused Paul of, he was able to defend himself one after the other and Felix was satisfied with his defense and as such he could not declare a guilty verdict on Paul. Sadly, Felix left Paul in Prison although he gave him an ample amount of freedom, obviously because he could see that Paul was not guilty. He called to speak to Paul from time to time, probably because he thought Paul would offer him some bribe. When Paul did not offer him any bribe, he left him in detention for more than two years.

When Felix was removed from his position, he was replaced by Festus. A few days after Festus assumed office, he went on an official visit to Jerusalem. During the visit, the Jews requested that Paul be brought to them for judgement. A request that was turned down by Festus. Instead he chose to judge Paul in Caesarea and have the Jewish leaders come for the prosecution. This is what the Jewish leaders did. Again, like it happened with Felix, they were not able to convince Festus that Paul was guilty as Paul was able to refute all their accusations one after the other. When Festus wanted to concede to the request of the Jews that Paul be sent to Jerusalem for the judgement, Paul decided to appeal to Caesar. This is another situation that kept Paul in detention for yet longer. Upon the visit of King Agrippa and his sister Bernice, Festus asked them if they will like to talk to Paul so he could at least have something to write to Caesar about him when he is sent to Caesar. To this, King Agrippa agreed. Since King Agrippa was of high royalty, all the important personalities in town had to also attend that hearing on that day. This is a fulfilment of the words of God in Acts 19:15 which He spoke to Ananias in Damascus when he went and prayed for Paul saying 'this man is My chosen instrument to carry My name before the

Gentiles and their kings, and before the people of Israel'. Chapter 25 ended with this arrangement to talk to King Agrippa.

Chapter 24: Paul Accused of Seditious.

24 Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator *named* Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul.

²And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: "Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, ³we accept *it* always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. ⁴Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us. ⁵For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. ⁶He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law. ⁷But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took *him* out of our hands, ⁸commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him." ⁹And the Jews also assented, maintaining that these things were so.

Note the way the Tertullus started the accusations of Paul; He first praised him. When we approach the presence of a king, it is not an unusual thing to praise him.

How do you praise the Almighty God when you approach his presence? Luke 11:2, Psalm 150:1-6, Psalm 51:15. Praise should part of our lives.

Paul was accused of three things; what were they? Vs 5-6.

Did Paul do any of these things?

From these accusations, I want you to know and think what a non-believer could do to you and even some believers. It should therefore not shock you when these things happen. This is because they are men and they are subject to the directions and directives of the devil. John 8:44. It is interesting that the Jews assented to the words of Tertullus even when the

accusations were false. One thing consistent with lying is the inability to be consistent about one's statement. In Acts 21:28, Paul is accused of desecrating the temple by bringing in a Gentile. Now it is said that he tried to profane the temple.

Do some believers do the same thing? Prov 24:28, I Peter 3:10, Psalm 34:12, James 1:26, Exodus 20:16

The Defense Before Felix

¹⁰Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered: "In as much as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself, ¹¹because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship. ¹²And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city. ¹³Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me. ¹⁴But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. ¹⁵I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of *the* dead, both of *the* just and *the* unjust. ¹⁶This *being* so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

¹⁷"Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation, ¹⁸in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor with tumult. ¹⁹They ought to have been here before you to object if they had anything against me. ²⁰Or else let those who are *here* themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council, ²¹unless *it is* for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.'"

Paul's defense again is very brilliant and factual. He did not have to tell lies to defend himself. He did not praise Felix but he said Felix understands Judea well enough to make an accurate judgement. This is a statement of fact.

In his defense, he says he has not stayed long in Jerusalem enough to cause any problem. He explained that he did not belong to any sect but the Way as Felix knew who the Way was. He then linked the way with Judaism to show that there was no major difference. Again, he briefly described his Pharisaic leaning. For the first time, he talks about the alms he brought to Jerusalem. He hinged his entire defense on his Pharisaic belief. He rounded up his defense by ascertaining that his accusers were not really witnesses as the people who accused him were Jews from Asia who are absent. That sealed the fate of his accusers.

Please take note that Paul did not have to tell lies to defend himself. When you find yourself telling lies to defend yourself, it means what you did in the first place was sin which you are trying to cover up. The solution to that is simply repent

What is the place of intelligence or wisdom as a believer? Matthew 10:16.
(Some believers turn this around)

The world relies on wise men. Daniel 5 and 6, Gen 41

Wisdom is the principal thing Ecc 7:12, 9:16-18, Prov 4:7, 16:16.

Felix Procrastinates

²²But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of *the Way*, he adjourned the proceedings and said, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case." ²³So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let *him* have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him.

²⁴And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. ²⁵Now 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." ²⁶Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him.

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

The decision of Felix tells you that he was convinced that Paul was not guilty Vs 23.

Why didn't he release Paul? Perhaps the answer is in Verse 26.

Also the Lord opened the way for Felix and his wife to hear the gospel.

Examine what Paul preached to Felix in verse 25. These seem to be the opposite of what the average believer will preach today. Gal 5:23, Titus 1:8, 1 Cor 9:25.

Chapter 25: Paul Appeals to Caesar

25 Now when Festus had come to the province, after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. ²Then the high priest and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they petitioned him, ³asking a favor against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem—while *they* lay in ambush along the road to kill him. ⁴But 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.”

Felix left Paul in Prison for two years even when he was convinced that Paul was innocent. He later lost his position to Festus. Festus visited the Jews in Jerusalem a few days after he resumed office. The Jews wanted Paul brought to Jerusalem to be judged but Festus turned down their request.

Who can tell why Festus did this even when he wanted to please the Jews?
Prov 21:1, 19:21, Psalm 33:10-11

⁶And 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. ⁷When 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, ⁸while 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.”

The Jews again could not prove anything against Paul. Paul in reference to what the accusers said against him, he avoided saying anything evil against the Temple, the Jewish laws and Caesar.

If it were you how will you respond after been held unjustifiably for two years. Psalm 37:8, Ecc 7:9, Prov 14:29.

⁹But 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?"

¹⁰So 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. ¹¹For 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."

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

It did not sound as if anything would be wrong if Paul had answered yes to the request of Festus.

What do you think would have happened if Paul had agreed to Festus' request? Mark 13:11, James 1:5.

Paul Before Agrippa

¹³And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus. ¹⁴When 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. ¹⁶To 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. ¹⁸When

the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed, ¹⁹but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. ²⁰And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters. ²¹But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar."

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

"Tomorrow," he said, "you shall hear him."

²³So 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. ²⁴And 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. ²⁵But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him. ²⁶I 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. ²⁷For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him."

King Agrippa and Bernice were brother and sister that were living an incestuous life. On this occasion, note the calibre of people that were arranged for Paul to speak to. The Bible called them, the commanders and prominent men of the city. These commanders were soldiers that had a thousand soldiers under them. This is definitely the Lord's arrangement to reach the high and mighty in the society. Acts 9:15.

We must realise that at all times, all things work together for God to them that love God. Rom 8:28, Gen 50:20, I Cor 2:9, I Cor 1:9. Here, Festus reiterates the fact the Paul is innocent. Then, why leave him in jail? Paul's appeal to Caesar was of God. Acts 23:11.

Are you going through some challenges right now that you think has no reason? If you are hinged in God, there is definitely a reason why you are encountering your challenges. If you wait long enough, He will let you know why you are going through these challenges and when you find out why, you will be glad it happened.