



# Previously in Acts

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- We left Paul in Caesarea where he appeared before Felix the governor and his wife Drusilla.
- The chapter ended with this statement.
- **Acts 24:27** (ESV)

When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

# Acts 25 Introduction

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- Now, two years later, Paul is still in Roman custody and the new governor Festus is in office.
- Leaders have played political games but have not proven any criminal charges against Paul.
- In this chapter the political games continue.

# Acts 25    Key Verse

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- Acts 25:11 (ESV)

“If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar.”

# Acts 25 Outline



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1. Festus in Jerusalem 25:1-5
2. Paul Before Festus 25:6-12
3. Festus is Confused 25:13-22
4. Paul Before Royalty 25:23-27

# 1. Festus in Jerusalem    Acts 25:1-5

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- 25:1    Festus is making a courtesy visit to Jerusalem.
- Caesarea was the Roman headquarters.
- It was normal for a new governor to go see the center of Jewish social and religious life.

# 1. Festus in Jerusalem    Acts 25:1-5

- 25:2-3    the chief priests and principal men of the Jews ... asking as a favor
- This is a key idea in this section of Acts.
- We just saw it in the last verse of the last chapter.

# 1. Festus in Jerusalem    Acts 25:1-5

- 25:2-3    they were planning an ambush
- This is *Plan B* after what happened in Acts 23.
- That last time the plot was ruined when Paul's nephew found out and warned the Roman tribune.

# 1. Festus in Jerusalem    Acts 25:1-5

- 25:4-5 Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea ... “So ... go down with me”
- They probably imagined it would be easier to pull off their scheme with the new governor.
- Happily for Paul, it didn't work this time either

# 1. Festus in Jerusalem    Acts 25:1-5

*Once again, then, God was working behind the scenes to protect Paul from the murderous plans of the Jewish leaders ... No matter how grim your circumstances appear, do not forget the glorious truth that God is in control, whether directly or indirectly.*

*– Tony Evans,  
Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship*



## 2. Paul Before Festus     Acts 25:6-12



## 2. Paul Before Festus     Acts 25:6-12

- 25:6-8     many and serious charges ... that they could not prove
- The same was true at first when they came before Felix the previous governor.
- Once again, they have nothing substantial to bring against Paul.

## 2. Paul Before Festus     Acts 25:6-12

- 25:9     wishing to do the Jews a favor
- Compare with the last verse in the previous chapter.
- Acts 24:27 (ESV)

When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

- But also contrast with Acts 18.

## 2. Paul Before Festus     Acts 25:6-12

- Acts 18:12-17 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, <sup>13</sup> saying, “This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law.” <sup>14</sup> But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint.

## 2. Paul Before Festus      Acts 25:6-12

- Acts 18:12-17 (ESV)

<sup>15</sup> But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things.” <sup>16</sup> And he drove them from the tribunal. <sup>17</sup> And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

## 2. Paul Before Festus     Acts 25:6-12

- The Jews and Romans had no special friendship.
- Usually they were at odds.
- In Acts 18, Paul was in Greece where the Roman official paid no attention to the Jews.
- Now we are in Judea and it is a different story.

## 2. Paul Before Festus     Acts 25:6-12

*While we should use the law to look after us, we should not naively think that resorting to the law will automatically provide justice ... Even the best legal system is administered by fallen individuals, who may choose expediency over what is right.*

*– Ajith Fernando,  
Youth for Christ, Sri Lanka*



## 2. Paul Before Festus     Acts 25:6-12

*... This calls for wisdom on the part of the Christian, so that we take a course of action that will best serve the cause of Christ.*

*– Ajith Fernando,  
Youth for Christ, Sri Lanka*



## 2. Paul Before Festus     Acts 25:6-12

- Which brings us to our key verse.
- Acts 25:11 (ESV)

“If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar.”



## 2. Paul Before Festus     Acts 25:6-12

- As early as Acts 19, Paul was determined to go to Rome.
- Acts 19:21 (ESV)

Now after these events [encounters with demons and many occult practices] Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.”

## 2. Paul Before Festus     Acts 25:6-12

- More recently, while still in Jerusalem, the Lord spoke to Paul.
- Acts 23:11 (ESV)

The following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.”

## 2. Paul Before Festus     Acts 25:6-12

- Paul did not expect a fair trial in **Jerusalem**.
- At the same time, he firmly believed that **Rome** was in his future – even if that meant before **Nero**.
- So, as a Roman citizen, he used his right of appeal.
- **Acts 25:12** (ESV)

Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, “To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.”

### 3. Festus Is Confused

Acts 25:13-22

### 3. Festus Is Confused     Acts 25:13-22

- 25:13     Agrippa the king and Bernice
- This is Herod Agrippa II, the son of the Herod Agrippa that persecuted the church in Acts 12 – but then died.
- Bernice was Agrippa's sister who moved in with him after her husband/uncle died in A.D. 48.
- Their relationship was a little scandalous, but perhaps nothing special for the Herod family.

### 3. Festus Is Confused     Acts 25:13-22

- 25:13     Agrippa the king and Bernice
- Bernice later ignited a bigger scandal in Rome.
- She went there with Agrippa, but then moved in with Titus, the emperor Vespasian's son.
- This was shortly after Titus led the Roman armies in defeating the Jews and destroying Jerusalem.

### 3. Festus Is Confused     Acts 25:13-22

- 25:18-20<sup>18</sup> ... no charge in his case of such evils as I supposed. ... certain points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive.<sup>20</sup> Being at a loss how to investigate these questions ...
- Festus is a Roman and new to Judea. And the best advisors he can find are Agrippa and Bernice.
- You almost feel bad for him.

### 3. Paul Before Royalty     Acts 25:23-27



### 3. Paul Before Royalty     Acts 25:23-27

- **25:23**     So on the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. Then, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in.
- This verse gives us a perfect lesson on appearances.
- Paul is the real star of this show and he is brought before all these highflying people as a prisoner.

### 3. Paul Before Royalty     Acts 25:23-27

- 25:25-27     <sup>25</sup> But I found that he had done nothing deserving death ... <sup>26</sup> But I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him ... <sup>27</sup> For it seems to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not to indicate the charges against him.
- There is nothing to write because the fact is, Paul is not guilty of any wrongdoing.

### 3. Paul Before Royalty     Acts 25:23-27

- For Paul, all of this was an advanced course in things like patience, perseverance and humility.
- Before we close, let's look at a few verses on that.

### 3. Paul Before Royalty     Acts 25:23-27

- Psalm 37:7 (ESV)

Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;  
fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his  
way,  
over the man who carries out evil devices!

### 3. Paul Before Royalty     Acts 25:23-27

- Romans 12:12 (ESV)

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

### 3. Paul Before Royalty    Acts 25:23-27

- Colossians 3:12 (ESV)

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

# Acts 25    What We Just Read

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# Acts 25    Key Points

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1. God was working behind the scenes to get Paul to Rome according to his perfect plan.
2. In the same way, he is working in our lives, even when we do not see it.
3. Legal and political solutions can be helpful, so we should use them when we can.
4. At the same time politicians are fallen people just like us, so we can only expect so much.

## Acts 25    Key Points

5. Agrippa, Bernice, Festus and the rest all looked much more important than Paul.
6. Yet Paul has had by far the greatest historical influence, giving us a lesson on appearances.
7. Like Paul, but perhaps in smaller ways, we need to learn patience, perseverance and humility.

# Acts 25    A Prayer

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- Our Father in heaven,
- Thank you for your word, through which we can learn about you and learn to be like you – and learn from the examples you give us, both good and bad.
- Teach us to trust you as we remember that you are always working behind the scenes. Remind us of that work and in your mercy allow us to see the effects of it from time to time.

# Acts 25    A Prayer

- Thank you for reminding us that we live in a world in which legal and political forces in many ways control our lives.
- Help us to work and live within those boundaries, while continuing to trust you more than these earthly systems.
- We accept the fact that our leaders are just as fallen as we are, so remind us to pray for them often.



# Acts 25    A Prayer

- And finally, send your Holy Spirit to teach us and empower us to exercise patience, perseverance and humility at all times.
- In that way we can have assurance that our lives will be pleasing to you.
- In Christ,
- Amen

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