

16) >>>>>>> Acts - Lesson 35 <<<<<<<<

- 1) We left last time as Paul was on trial before Felix.
 - a) Tertullus had completed his spiel and the Jews had joined in in the accusations against Paul.
 - b) Now it is Paul's time to speak in his own defense.

Acts 24:10–23 (NIV)

- 2) Felix motions for Paul to speak.
- 3) As he speaks, he does not address his accusers – he really speaks to Felix directly clearly defining the fact that what charges they have brought are indeed without any substance.
- 4) He also brings to the table all the other important facts that they were omitting.
 - a) He was ceremonially clean when this arrest took place.
 - b) He was not arguing with anyone at the temple.
 - c) He was not stirring up a crowd in the synagogues.
- 5) It is also important to note the he clarifies the point regarding their claim that he was a ringleader of the Nazarene sect.
 - a) The statement by Tertullus was to cast Paul as an insurrectionist – a leader of a sect that was causing trouble for Rome and the Jews.
 - b) Thankfully, as Luke indicates, Felix was well acquainted with the Way so that argument did not hold much validity.
- 6) Finally, he challenges them through Felix to bring the Jews from the Province of Asia here to Caesarea to state the crimes of which they think he is guilty.
- 7) Now, we have to consider carefully this next section.
 - a) Felix tells Paul that when Lysias the commander comes he will decide Paul's case.
 - b) Here is the important part – we are not told that he asked anyone to have Lysias come to Caesarea.
 - c) If Felix had indeed requested Lysias to come, I think there is no doubt that he would have.
 - d) At a minimum, since Felix was his superior, Lysias would have had to reply in some fashion or another. Possibilities are:
 - i) Lysias remained in Jerusalem: He might have sent a written report or delegation to Felix.
 - ii) A visit was planned but didn't happen – Circumstances might have prevented Lysias from traveling to Caesarea.
 - e) Of course, this could have been simply a delaying tactic – Felix might have used Lysias as a pretext to postpone a decision.

- 8) Bottomline is that Lysias is never reported to have come to Caesarea – no Lysias – no decision.
– and as we will see next, 2 years of confinement for Paul.

Acts 24:24–27 (NIV)

- 1) Looking a little bit deeper at Felix, we can see the reason for some of this.
- 2) Felix was a man of low birth who rose to power through the influence of his well-connected brother Pallas.
- 3) He married and used that to expedite his political career.
 - a) Drusilla was a sister of Herod Agrippa II who we will meet in in chapter 25.
 - b) He also married the granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra.
- 4) Tacitus the historian described Felix’s career as clearly self serving.

“He exercised the power of a king with the mind of a slave.”
- 5) He was regarded as a poor governor, dispensed justice arbitrarily, and served his own ends.
- 6) In this particular case, Felix was more interested in maintaining peace with the Jewish community than in seeking justice.
 - a) He used Paul as a political pawn to appease the Jewish leaders.
- 7) Despite the lack of evidence Paul was held in custody for two years.
- 8) He also had truly not been convicted of any crime whatsoever which I think made this illegal.
 - a) Felix repeatedly postponed the trial, hoping to extract a bribe from Paul.
 - b) One of those questions to ponder – Who would have held Felix accountable?
- 9) We don’t know the exact conditions of Paul's imprisonment. However, it's reasonable to assume he faced limitations on his movement and social interactions.
- 10) As always, Paul regardless of the circumstances would look for opportunities to share the gospel.
 - a) He had multiple meetings with Felix, during which he testified about Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God.
 - b) Paul's witness likely influenced not only Felix but also others who came into contact with him during this period.
- 11) Felix’s response to Paul’s message was fear. Fear of the judgement to come.

Should fear figure into our salvation?

Is it sufficient to base our salvation only on fear?

- 12) By rights, Paul should have been freed when Felix was replaced by Porcius Festus but, Felix being the bad guy he was, did not. (Por chus)

Acts 25:1–12 (NIV)

- 1) Well, it has been a little over two years and obviously, the Jews have not forgotten Paul.
 - a) In fact, from Luke’s comment here, it appears that they may have created even more false charges against him.
 - b) But their end game was not changed – they have every intention of killing Paul.
 - c) This could almost be considered borderline obsession to have held on to the desire to kill Paul for this length of time and to have gone to these extremes.
 - 2) Although it is very short, Paul makes his defense here again.
 - 3) One thing to keep in mind here is that, unlike Felix, Festus knows little if anything about Jewish laws and customs.
 - 4) So, Festus then puts Paul in a very bad position.
 - a) Since he still wants to keep in favor with the Jews from Jerusalem, he asks Paul directly if he is willing to go to Jerusalem to stand trial before him there.
 - b) Paul’s initial response is really a point of Roman law.
 - i) He is pointing out that there is no reason for him and Festus to go to Jerusalem for Paul to stand trial – Festus is the court in this case regardless of where he is.
 - ii) Beyond that, Paul knows that if he is sent back to Jerusalem he will most likely be killed before the trial would begin.
 - 5) In response, Paul then makes a statement which seals his fate in this situation.
 - a) With the Jews being more adamant than ever to take him to trial in Jerusalem, he undoubtedly knows that they are still going to try to kill him – by murder or by conviction on false charges just as they did Jesus.
 - b) He is really in a position where there only two choices for him.
 - c) He can take his chances that Festus will let him go since there are no charges against him which, as a Roman, he can be tried for.
 - i) That’s probably out of the question since Festus has brought the trial in Jerusalem into the picture.
 - d) The other is to appeal to Caesar. He probably feels this is his only way out.
 - e) If he agreed to go to trial in Jerusalem, it was obvious what the outcome would be if he even made it to Jerusalem alive.
 - f) Probably, in all likelihood, Paul, remembering his Lord’s words back in chapter 23 verse 11 sees this as the way this should be accomplished.
- ¹¹ ... **“Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.”**
- g) What better way to get to Rome and the fulfillment of what the Lord had said.

- h) He must escape this situation and the only way that is a for sure option is for him as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar.
- 6) Even this is not without its own set of problems.
 - a) For Festus, he has to have some charge against Paul before he can do this.
 - b) For Paul, it means staying longer in custody.

Acts 25:13–22 (NIV)

- 1) Agrippa and Festus had a professional and diplomatic relationship
 - a) Agrippa II was a client king under Roman rule, ruling over a portion of Judea.
 - b) As we have discussed, Porcius Festus was the Roman procurator (governor) of Judea.
- 2) As we said a moment ago, Festus was not familiar with Jews and their Laws and customs however, Agrippa was.
- 3) When Festus faced a difficult case involving Paul, he decided to consult Agrippa.
 - a) It obviously will give Festus some answers but also, this shows a respect for Agrippa's position and wisdom.
- 4) So, Agrippa acted as an advisor to Festus, offering his perspective on the case. He also served as a witness to Paul's defense, adding weight to the proceedings.
- 5) As the text shows, Festus addresses Agrippa with respect, and Agrippa listens attentively to the case as it is explained.
- 6) The conclusion is that Agrippa wants to hear the case personally.

Acts 25:23–27 (NIV)

- 1) With much ado, Paul is brought before this very august assembly – high ranking military, leaders of the city of Caesarea, the governor and of course, the King.
- 2) Festus begins by clearly stating that he finds nothing in all this that says Paul should be put to death.
- 3) What he is looking for from the group, especially Agrippa, is a charge that he might put in a letter to Rome as he sends him to the Emperor.