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By Dan Maines

Acts 25

Acts 25:1-3

Now Festus, having arrived in the province, three days later went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. And the chief priests and the leading men of the Jews brought charges against Paul, and they were pleading with Festus, requesting a concession against Paul, that he might have him brought to Jerusalem (at the same time, setting an ambush to kill him on the way).

† The Jewish leaders persisted in their hatred, plotting Paul's death. Their desire for ambush mirrored their earlier failed

conspiracies.

† Josephus (Antiquities 20.8.9) records Jewish plots against opponents, confirming this violent mindset.

Acts 25:4-5

Festus then answered that Paul was being kept in custody in Caesarea, and that he himself was about to leave shortly.

"Therefore," he said, "have the influential men among you go there with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, have them bring charges against him."

† Festus upheld Roman procedure by refusing to hand Paul over without trial, showing Rome's role as protector against mob justice.

Acts 25:6-8

Now after Festus had spent not more than eight or ten days among them, he went down to Caesarea, and on the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered that Paul be brought. After Paul arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many, and serious charges against him which they could not prove, while Paul said in his own defense, "I have not done anything wrong either against the Law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against Caesar."

† The accusations remained unproven. Paul defended himself on three fronts: Jewish law, temple reverence, and loyalty to Caesar.

Acts 25:9

But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, replied to Paul and said, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem to be tried before me on these charges?"

† Festus sought political favor, exposing the corrupt compromise between Roman officials and Jewish leaders.

Acts 25:10-11

But Paul said, "I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. I have done nothing wrong to the Jews, as you also very well know. If, therefore, I am in the wrong and have committed anything deserving death, I am not refusing to die; but if none of those things is true of which these men are accusing me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"

† Paul exercised his right as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar. This moved the case beyond local corruption to the highest court in the empire.

† Roman law allowed such appeals, as documented in legal records such as the Digest of Justinian.

Acts 25:12

Then when Festus had conferred with his council, he answered, "You have appealed to Caesar, to Caesar you shall go."

† God's plan to send Paul to Rome was now sealed. Festus' decision aligned with Christ's promise in Acts 23:11.

Acts 25:13-14

Now when several days had passed, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived in Caesarea, paying their respects to Festus. While they were spending many days there, Festus presented Paul's case to the king, saying, "There is a man who was left as a prisoner by Felix."

† Agrippa II, the last Herodian king, and his sister Bernice wielded influence under Rome. Their presence provided Festus an opportunity for counsel.

† Josephus (Antiquities 20.7.3) records Agrippa II's reign and his ties with Rome.

Acts 25:15-17

"And when I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews brought charges against him, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him. I replied to them that it is not the custom of the Romans to hand over any person before the accused meets his accusers face to face and has an opportunity to make his defense against the charges. So after they had assembled here, I did not delay, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered that the man be brought before me."

† Festus recounted Roman legal procedure, highlighting fairness in theory, though his motives were political.

Acts 25:18-19

"And when the accusers stood up, they did not begin bringing any charges against him of crimes that I suspected, but they simply had some points of disagreement with him about their own religion and about a dead man, Jesus, whom Paul asserted to be alive."

† Festus revealed his ignorance of Jewish faith. He dismissed the resurrection as a religious dispute, not recognizing its world-changing reality.

Acts 25:20-21

"And being at a loss how to investigate such matters, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial there on these matters. But when Paul appealed to be held in custody for the Emperor's decision, I ordered that he be kept in custody until I send him to Caesar."

† Festus admitted his lack of understanding. Paul's appeal forced the case into Rome's highest court.

Acts 25:22

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

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

† Agrippa's curiosity set the stage for Paul's bold testimony before kings, fulfilling Acts 9:15.

Acts 25:23

So, on the next day when Agrippa and Bernice came amid great pomp and entered the auditorium, accompanied by the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in.

† The contrast was striking: Agrippa and Bernice entered with pomp and splendor, Paul entered in chains but carried the truth of God's kingdom.

Acts 25:24-27

Festus said, "King Agrippa, and all you gentlemen present with us, you see this man about whom all the people of the Jews appealed to me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. But I found that he had committed nothing deserving death; and since he himself appealed to the Emperor, I decided to send him. Yet, I have nothing definite about him to write to my lord. Therefore, I have brought him before you all, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the investigation has taken place, I may have something to write. For it seems absurd to me in sending a prisoner, not to indicate the charges against him as well."

† Festus admitted Paul had done nothing worthy of death. His dilemma was sending a prisoner to Caesar with no real charge. God turned political confusion into an opportunity for Paul to testify before rulers.

How it applies to us today

† Believers may face false accusations, but truth stands firm before every tribunal.

† The resurrection of Jesus is the core issue that still divides faith and unbelief.

† God's providence works even through corrupt politics to advance His kingdom.

† True power lies not in pomp and ceremony, but in the testimony of Christ.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

Source Index

† Josephus, Antiquities 20.8.9 – Jewish plots and conspiracies

† Josephus, Antiquities 20.7.3 – Agrippa II's reign and Roman ties

† Tacitus, Histories 5.9 – Character of Roman officials like Felix and Festus

† Digest of Roman Law – Right of appeal to Caesar

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