

Notes for Acts - Chapter 24-25a: " Brought Before Kings & Governors" (Page 1 of 3)

Jesus said to his disciples: "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. ¹³ This will result in your being witnesses to them. (Luke 21:12-13, NIV)

Remember that Jesus wasn't speaking to Paul here. Therefore, we can interpret this prediction as not just being to the 12 disciples directly.

Introduction - Comparison of Jesus' Trials and Paul's Trials:

<u>Jesus Trials (30 years earlier)</u>	<u>Paul's Trials (Acts 23-26)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pontius Pilate asked, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" (Matt.27:22).<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The answer to that question affects one's eternal destiny.• Jesus said: "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10:39, NIV)• The Jewish leadership plots to kill Jesus out of jealousy. (Reference: Matthew 27:18)• The Roman Governor believed Jesus was innocent (Reference: Luke 23:4, others)• The Roman Governor <u>Pilate</u> had a problem:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pilate knew Jesus was innocent. (Reference: John 19:12)• He needed to "appease" the Jewish leadership as they had a lot of power.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pontius Pilate is now replaced by Felix.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Felix is remembered as wicked & cruel.• In Chapter 25, The Roman Emperor "fires him". He is replaced by Festus.• The Jewish leadership tried many times to kill Paul out of jealousy. (Reference: Acts 13:45)• The Roman Governor believed Paul was innocent (Reference: Acts 26:32)• The Roman Governor <u>Felix</u> had a problem:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Felix suspected Paul was innocent and stalled for time by keeping Paul in jail for 2 years. (Reference: Acts 24:27)• Felix needed to "appease" the Jewish leadership as he did a lot of cruel anti-Jewish acts and was about to be "recalled". (Source: Historians Josephus & Tacitus)

Here is the difference between Jesus and Paul:

1. Jesus willfully gave up his life for our sins. (Reference: John 3:16)
2. Paul did not have to give up his life for our sins.
3. Paul did everything he could to prolong his life to live another day to witness for Jesus.

Paul said, "As long as I'm alive in this body, there is good work for me to do. If I had to choose right now, I hardly know which I'd choose. Hard choice! The desire to break camp here and be with Christ is powerful. Some days I can think of nothing better. But most days, because of what you are going through, I am sure that it's better for me to stick it out here." (Phil. 1:22-24 Paraphrase "The Message")

Introduction - Key Verse of this Chapter:

- "When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison. (Acts 24:27)
- Paul was left in prison for two years so Felix could "stall" on a decision.
- Don't you think Paul "questioned" God's promise of sending Paul to Rome during this time?
- "Paul the great missionary" is "Now "Paul the prisoner".
 - Are you still trusting God when you're world is falling apart?

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A Summary of Chapter 24 and 25:1-12:

- Recap of Chapter 23:
 1. Paul was imprisoned in Jerusalem.
 2. Some 40 Jews planned to ambush/kill Paul under the pretense of another trial.
 3. The Roman commander found out, and sent Paul, under guard to Caesarea 20 miles away.
 4. Paul was to be tried in front of Governor Felix. Paul's accusers had to come there.
 - Chapter 24 Verses 1-23: Paul's trial and results in front of Governor Felix.
 1. Verses 1-9 were the Jewish leaders making their case. They have a lawyer named Tertullus.
 2. Verses 10-21 are Paul makes his defense. He focuses on facts of the case as a defense.
 3. Verses 22-23 are Felix rendering a decision. He "stalls for time".
 - Paul mentions he came to Jerusalem to bring a money collection to the poor.
 - Felix stalls for time, hoping for a bribe (Verse 26). He allows Paul to have visitors.
 - Verses 24-26: Felix and his wife Drusilla visit Paul in jail during his 2 years in jail.
 1. Paul is recorded as preaching to them during those Felix during those time periods.
 - Verses 27 and Chapter 5, Verses 1-12: Felix was succeeded by Festus as Governor of the territory.
 1. Chapter 25 Verses 1:5: Festus arrives. Festus meets with the Jewish leaders. They want Paul tried again in Jerusalem. They wanted to kill Paul prior to another trial.
 2. Festus decides to have Paul stay in Caesarea and have him tried there.
 3. Paul has an "arraignment" hearing in front of Festus.
 4. Paul, thinking he can't get a fair trial "appeals to Caesar."
 5. It is the right of every Roman Citizen to appeal his case to the Emperor in Rome.
 - Next Week: Festus must decide what to write to the Emperor as charges.
 1. He invites King Herod (neighboring territory) to listen in and consult.
 2. Next week we have Paul's trial in front of Governor Festus and King Herod.
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Notes for Chapter 24 and 25:1-12:

Verse 1-9: The Jewish leaders making their accusation.

- They have a lawyer named Tertullus argue their case.
 - In the first 4 Verses, Tertullus tries to "butter up" Governor Felix.
 - "Flattery is like perfume. It should be smelled, but never swallowed." Jon Curson

Verse 10: Paul makes his defense and mentions his belief in the resurrection.

- Paul couldn't think of one good thing to say about Felix, so he just says, "well, you are a governor."
- Paul makes a "practical" defense. He focuses on the facts of the case, like a good attorney.
 - Paul did not say, "Well, God said I'm going to Rome, so just let me go!"
- Paul said he believes in the "resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked"
 - These two resurrections, Biblically, they are a thousand years apart.
 - "And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." (1st Thessalonians 4:16-17, NKJV)
 - After the millennium is mentioned in Chapter 20, then it says, "" And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. (Revelation 20:12 NIV)"
 - John's "floppy disk" illustration: A computer floppy disk weighs the same if it is blank or filled with software data. The "real you" is like software. After we die, God "transfers" us to our new body. When Jesus was resurrected, he still ate food (John 21:15), yet Jesus could "enter a locked room/walk through walls (John 20:26). Our new body will be like Jesus' body (1st John 3:2).

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Verse 16: Paul said, "so I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man".

- "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." (Ephesians 4:22-24, NIV)
- "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling," (Phil 2:12 NIV)

Verse 19: Paul said in effect, "my accusers should be here".

- The actual man/people who accused Paul of bringing Gentiles in the Temple were not present.
- Roman Law and American law both require that a criminal defendant must face his accusers.

Verse 24: Felix and his wife Druscilla talk to Paul in Prison.

- Verse 25 implies that Felix wanted to bribe to release him.
- Paul uses those visits not to ask for release, but as an opportunity to share Christ!

Verse 25: "Paul discoursed (to Felix) on (1) righteousness, (2) self-control and (3) the judgment to come."

- "Righteousness" means right standing before God.
- "Self-Control": God wants us to focus on Him.
 - Watch out for the danger of making an idol out of self-discipline. It is God working *through* us!
- "The judgment to come": We are all accountable to God, "saved" and "unsaved".
 - Witnessing technique: "If they won't listen to Jesus, give them Moses!" Dr. Walter Martin.
- Felix said, "that's enough for now". He was probably convicted by his sins and Paul's speeches.

Verse 27: Felix is replaced by Festus. Paul was in jail for two years.

- Felix went down in history as the only Roman slave ever to be governor. He was remembered as a wicked man. He failed to acknowledge God for his blessings and never got saved.
- When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan. (Proverbs 29:2 NKJV)
- Commentators speculate that this two-year period is when Luke wrote Gospel of Luke/most of Acts.

Chapter 25, Verses 1-12: Paul's arraignment before Festus.

- Some Jews were planning another ambush on the way to Jerusalem.
- Festus, unaware of this, makes agrees to a new trial, but in Caesarea, not in Jerusalem.
 - "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases. (Proverbs 21:1 NIV)
- During Paul's two years in jail, he probably figured out God was getting him to Rome *by* these trials.
- In Verse 10, Paul appeals his case to Caesar.
 - It is every Roman citizen's right to appeal his or her case to Caesar in Rome.
 - The current Emperor (Caesar) was Nero. He was probably "Christian-friendly" at this time.
 - After Paul's trial before Nero, he became insane and violent toward Christians (speculation).
 - Festus found a way of getting out of "this mess" by agreeing to let Paul appeal to Caesar.
 - Like a good bureaucrat, he found a way to "pass the buck".
 - The problem is Festus had to write up formal charges to bring the case to Nero.

Next week: Paul's trial in front of Festus and King Herod.

- Festus still needed to know "what to write" for Paul's trial.
- He invited Herod, who reigned over a neighboring territory, to hear Paul "as a consultant on Jewish matters". Paul used the opportunity to publicly witness to Festus and King Herod.