

# A SURVEY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

## 14. PAUL'S TRIALS Acts 24 - 26

Adult Sunday School  
Gethsemane Baptist Church  
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## PAUL'S TRIALS

### Acts 24 – 26

Paul was moved in his spirit to return to Jerusalem after his third missionary journey. All along the road on the way back to Jerusalem different believers reported to him that the Spirit of God had revealed to them that if he went back to Jerusalem he would be bound and delivered to the gentiles as a prisoner. (21:10-13) Yet, he felt that he must return. His going back resulted in his being able to tell many unbelievers about the truth of the Gospel. His presence in Jerusalem caused great turmoil. Later, in a time of discouragement, the Lord came to him to comfort him. *“The Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.”* (23:11) He was to “bear witness also at Rome.” As a result of the turmoil his presence caused in Jerusalem, he was taken into custody by the Roman officials and delivered to Felix, the governor of Judea. When Felix received the letter with the charges against him, he decided to hear his case. He said, *“I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded*

*him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.” (23:35)*  
Felix called the Jewish leaders to Caesarea to testify against Paul.

Chapter 24 of Acts tells the story of Paul’s trial before Felix. “Antonius Felix . . . was appointed procurator of Judea in A.D. 52. . . . Both officially and personally, Felix was noted for his evil deeds. ‘Felix, indulging in every kind of barbarity and lust, exercised the power of a king in the spirit of a slave.’” (KENT. P. 171)

We read the opening remarks of the Jewish leaders and their charges against Paul in verses 1 – 9. The charges were:

1. Treason, He was accused of disturbing the peace and creating political dissension.
2. Religious heresy, He was accused of violating the laws of Moses.
3. Temple desecration. He was accused of taking a gentile into the Temple.

Paul is allowed to answer these charges in verses 10 - 21. He points out that they have no proof of the charges. (Vs. 13) In his testimony the reason for these circumstances is revealed. He said, *“But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.”* (Vs. 14) He

steadfastly affirms that, while he still reverences Judaism, he worships God in the way the Christians do. He points out the real reason for his trial. *“Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.”* (Vs. 21) He was there to witness to the truth of the resurrection. Felix, not knowing just what to do with him, orders Paul to be held until Porcius Festus comes to Caesarea. Paul is held for two years. During this time Felix talks to him often. He comes under conviction of his sin because Paul’s message of *“righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”* (Vs. 25a) His unfortunate conclusion is to tremble and put off a decision for Christ. He put off salvation and if he never returned to it he was eternally lost.

Felix realized that his tenure as the governor was coming to an end. “Porcius Festus succeeded Felix as governor of Judah in A.D. 58. According to Josephus, he was a marked improvement over Felix, and was better than his successor Albinus. Festus died after two years in office.” (KENT. P.177) As Paul was tried before Festus it was determined that he would take his case to Rome and stand before Caesar.

King Agrippa of Jerusalem and his wife Bernice came to Caesarea and greeted Festus. Festus told Agrippa about Paul's case. *"Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. Tomorrow, said he, thou shalt hear him."* (Vs. 25:22) Paul's audience with Agrippa in chapter 26 included the story of his life and conversion on the road to Damascus. He concludes with, *"For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."* (26: 21 – 23) He then challenges Agrippa. *"King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."* (Vs. 27) *"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."* (Vs. 28) It is not clear if he is saying that he is about to trust Christ or if he is being sarcastic. The result is the same. He did not believe and was never saved. It highlights the truth that is to "almost" be saved is to be lost.

Both Festus and Agrippa were puzzled about what to do with Paul. *“Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.”* (Vs. 32)

Paul is now in a position to complete the purpose for his life that Jesus had set before him. *“For as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.”* (Vs. 23:11)

TO AID OUR LEARNING:

1. What good things came out of Paul going back to Jerusalem even though he was urged not to?

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2. What was the real reason for Paul’s imprisonment?

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3. Was Agrippa's answer sincere or sarcastic?

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