

Perseverance in the Systems of Life Acts 24 & 25

vs. 1-9, Ananias and his lawyer Tertullus.

Accusations

- Agitator among all the Jews.
- Ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.
- Attempted to desecrate the temple.

Notice: There is no verse 7. It is present in some of the late manuscripts and adds explanation about the tribune seizing Paul in the Temple.

Felix the governor -> born a slave. 1st Century Palestine was filled with insurrections and lawlessness.

vs. 10-21, Paul's defense

- I have only been in Jerusalem for 12 days.
- I haven't been causing any sort of disturbance.
- I admit; I worship God (Yahweh) according to the Way. I believe everything in accordance with the law and written in the prophets.
- I have a hope in God that there will be a resurrection.
- I arrived in Jerusalem bringing charitable gifts and offerings to my people (the Jews).
- I was in the temple engaged in our traditions.

Side Note: Historically a major shift is taking place regarding the Temple.

1 Corinthians 3:16 Don't you yourselves know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God lives in you?

1 Corinthians 6:19 Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,

- My only statement, "Today I am on trial before you concerning the resurrection of the dead."
- I am a faithful Jew. Jesus did not make me stop being true to my ancestral faith. Jesus is the promised Messiah the very heart of Judaism.

The truth of Jesus has an uncanny way of comforting the disturbed and disturbing the comfortable.

vs. 22-27, Felix wanted some time to decide what to do.

Felix & Drusilla -> Felix did well for himself as a former slave. His first wife was the granddaughter of Mark Anthony and Cleopatra. His third wife was Drusilla, the youngest daughter of Agrippa I.

Paul engages with them on the subject of faith in Christ Jesus.

Righteousness

Self-control

The judgement to come.

Felix was simply hoping that Paul would give him a bribe and the matter would be over (vs. 26). Felix just passes on the issue of Paul to the next guy.

Chapter 25

vs. 1-5, Another legal lap - nothing has changed over the last 2 years.

Festus -> was a welcome successor to Felix. He began to rule in Judea in AD 60 and continued to AD 62. He inherited all the roubles and tensions that culminated in the disastrous war of AD 66-70,

vs. 6-12, Paul stays resolute

- Festus is continuing to play the political game with Paul's life hanging in the balance.

- Paul, “I am innocent”.
- Festus, “Are you willing to go to Jerusalem?”
- Paul, “I am where I ought to be. I am innocent. I appeal to Caesar!”

1 Corinthians 10:31-33 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or Greeks or the church of God, 33 just as I also try to please everyone in everything, not seeking my own benefit, but the benefit of many, so that they may be saved.

Paul desires justice and at the same time he wants those in charge to do their job and to do it properly.

Through Paul’s reliance on the Holy Spirit he is wise and uses the system to seek justice, “I appeal to Caesar.”

vs. 13-22, Local drama makes its rounds to the ears of local royalty.

King Agrippa -> Agrippa II (AD 27–93) was the son of Agrippa I and the great-grandson of Herod the Great.

Bernice -> is King Agrippa’s sister.

There were plenty of rumors in Rome and Palestine as to the nature of their relationship.

Rome’s strategy for controlling an area.

- Use local aristocracies whenever possible.
- This created the middle man who could do the dirty work of Rome and would often be blamed if things went badly.
- Judaea had become a problematic region.
- Remember Herod Agrippa I in Acts 12 who attacked the church and was eaten with worms.
- This could be confusing for who had jurisdiction over a matter.

The Main Point is getting through - **Jesus**, a dead man Paul claims **is alive**.

vs. 23-27, People’s lives are often used for the humor and entertainment of those who believe they are in control and hold power.

You finish chapter 25 with one clear thought - Paul is innocent.

Psalm 96:10, 13 Say among the nations, “The Lord reigns.

The world is firmly established; it cannot be shaken. He judges the peoples fairly.” **13** before the Lord, for he is coming— for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with his faithfulness.

God judges with righteousness and faithfulness.

- The intent of human authorities is to bring a measure of justice to the world.
- Humans are humans. Sometimes governments get it right and many times they get it very, very wrong.
- It is the task of God’s people to engage in all areas of life with the righteousness and faithfulness that is given to us by the Holy Spirit.
- We must speak up on issues of justice.
- We must remind the authorities what their job is supposed to be.

The resurrection allows followers of Jesus to be people of faith who actively demonstrate the truth that all things will be made new (and governments and authorities are here to participate in that renewal).

Jesus sets things right. Those who walk the narrow path of kingdom living participate in the anticipation that all things will be made new.

The church is an active agent of God’s peace in the world.

As we wait for God to act, he is often wanting to use us in the middle of the situation to take proper human responsibility!