

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

UNDER THE EXALTED CHRIST, THE GOSPEL BEGINS TO SPREAD

THE ACTS

† THE BOOK OF ACTS

OF THE APOSTLES

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, Associated

An overview of the Book of Acts, by Given O. Blakely

ACTS 5:31-32

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Lesson #97

COMMENTARY ON: 25:1-12

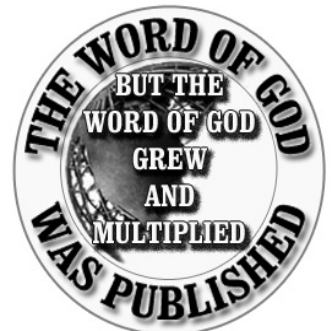
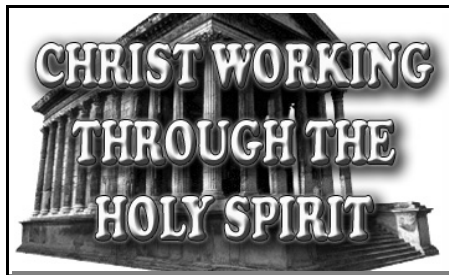
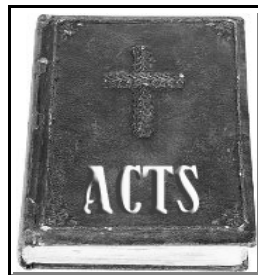
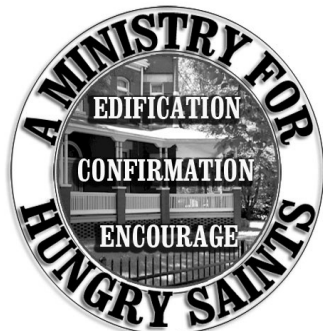
PAUL APPEALS TO CAESAR

Paul now appears before Festus, who will ask him if he is willing to go to Jerusalem and be judged by him. He did this to pacify the Jews, catering to them for personal aggrandizement. Paul then states that he is not willing to do so, because he is in Caesar's court, not that of the Jews. He affirms that Festus knows very well he has done "no wrong" to the Jews. Conscientiously he states that he is willing to die if he has done something that is worthy of death. If, on the other hand, the charges against him are totally false, no man has the right to deliver him to the Jews. He then appeals to the higher court, saying "I appeal to Caesar." Festus then conferred with the council and answered, "Hast thou appealed to Caesar? Unto Caesar shalt thou go." Thus, the word of Jesus to Paul, that he would "bear witness also at Rome" is set in motion. A series of events will follow that will clear the way for the fulfillment of that word. God was working all things together for good of Paul.

ACTS 17:26-27

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us."

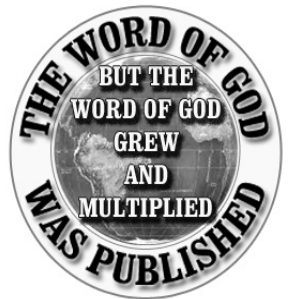
"... and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)



Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ

The Book of Acts

Lesson Number 97



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GNB=Good News (1966), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862).

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF HOW THE ENTHRONED CHRIST, BY MEANS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WORKED THROUGH HIS HOLY APOSTLES AND GODLY MEN, TO SPREAD THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD, AND TO BRING EDIFICATION AND STABILITY TO MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY.

----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

PAUL APPEALS TO CAESAR

“ 25:1 Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem. 2 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him, 3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him. 4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither. 5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him. 6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought. 7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove. 8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all. 9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? 10 Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. 11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar. 12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.” (Acts 25:1-12)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT
Paul now appears before Festus, who will ask him if he is willing to go to Jerusalem and be judged by him. He did this to pacify the Jews, catering to them for personal aggrandizement. Paul then stated that he was not willing to do so, because he is in Caesar's court, not that of the Jews. He

affirmed that Festus knows very well he has done “no wrong” to the Jews. Conscientiously he stated that he was willing to die if he had done something that was worthy of death. If, on the other hand, the charges against him were totally false, no man had the right to deliver him to the Jews. He then appealed to the higher court, saying “I appeal to Caesar.”

Festus then conferred with the council and answered, “Hast thou appealed to Caesar? Unto Caesar shalt thou go.” Thus, the word of Jesus to Paul, that he would “bear witness also at Rome” is set in motion. A series of events will follow that will clear the way for the fulfillment of that word. God was working all things together for good of Paul.

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THE WORKING OF THE LORD

Throughout the book of Acts the hand of the Lord is seen at work – causing all things to work together for the good of His people, and ultimately, for the fulfillment of His “*eternal purpose.*”

The Scriptures inform us that God uses all manner of people in the working out of His purpose. Some of them benefit from this use, and others do not. For example, Pharaoh was raised up that God’s “*name might be declared throughout the earth*” (Ex 9:16; Rom 9:17). That purpose, however, did not work out for the benefit of Pharaoh himself. He was a vessel in the house, but one that was suited “*for destruction*” (Rom 9:22). Solomon wrote, “*The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil*” (Prov 16:4). Other versions read, “*for the day of doom,*”^{»NKJV} “*for the day of disaster,*”^{»NIV} “*for the day of trouble,*”^{»NRSV} and “*[are fitted for their role] for the day of calamity and evil.*”^{»AMPLIFIED}

The “*Kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just*” (Matt 13:47-49). The wicked are, indeed, “*among the righteous*” – not as an integral part of them, but as an admixture that will be removed at “*the end of the world.*” Until then, they are “*in the net,*” governed by God

and used at His discretion. It is true that Satan works in and through such people, but all of that work is contained by the purpose of God. Ponder the different characters that have been involved in this episode of Paul.

- ⇨ James and the elders in Jerusalem (Acts 21:18-22).
- ⇨ Four Jewish men who had taken a vow (Acts 21:23).
- ⇨ Jews from Asia (Acts 21:27-28).
- ⇨ Trophimus, who was traveling with Paul (Acts 21:29).
- ⇨ The people of Jerusalem (Acts 21:30-31).
- ⇨ A Roman captain, Lysias by name (Acts 21:31).
- ⇨ Roman soldiers and centurions (Acts 21:32).
- ⇨ The chief priests of the Jews (Acts 21:30).
- ⇨ The Jewish council, or Sanhedrin (Acts 21:30).
- ⇨ The high priest Ananias (Acts 23:2a).
- ⇨ The man who struck Paul on the mouth (Acts 23:2b).
- ⇨ Those who stood by, responding to Paul’s reaction to the smiting (Acts 23:3).
- ⇨ The Pharisees (Acts 23:6).
- ⇨ The Sadducees (Acts 23:6).
- ⇨ The scribes (Acts 23:9).
- ⇨ Forty Jewish men who took a vow to kill Paul (Acts 23:12-13).
- ⇨ The chief priests and elders who sanctioned the vow (Acts 23:14-15).

- ⇨ Paul’s nephew (Acts 23:18).
- ⇨ One of the centurions to whom Paul sent his nephew (Acts 23: 17).
- ⇨ Two hundred soldiers (Acts 23:23a).
- ⇨ Seventy horsemen (Acts 23:23b).
- ⇨ Two hundred spearmen (Acts 23:23c).
- ⇨ The governor Felix (Acts 23:26).
- ⇨ An army (Acts 23:27).
- ⇨ Tertullus (Acts 24:1).
- ⇨ A centurion charged with keeping Paul safe (Acts 24:23).
- ⇨ Drusilla, Felix’s wife (Acts 24:24).
- ⇨ Festus, who replaced Felix (Acts 24:27).
- ⇨ Caesar Augustus (Acts 25:1).
- ⇨ Agrippa (Acts 25:13a).
- ⇨ Bernice, Agrippa’s wife (Acts 25:13b).

There are twenty-one individuals, and hundreds of others: all Jerusalem, hundreds of Jews, hundreds of soldiers, the Sanhedrin numbering seventy, forty Jews who took a vow, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen). **Who but God could manage such a conglomeration of people, working out His own will, protecting His servant, and arranging for him to transported to his next place of ministry?**

The Scriptures rarely spell out in doctrine how God is working everything together for good. An example of when this was done is the case of Joseph.

- ⇨ When referring to his time in prison because of false charges, it is written, “*But the LORD was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor*

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in the sight of the keeper of the prison” (Gen 39:21).

⇒ Concerning the sins of his brothers against him, he said: “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive” (Gen 50:20).

⇒ Speaking of Joseph’s tenure in Egypt, the Psalmist wrote: “He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: Until the

time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom” (Psa 105:17-22).

Such explanations are not always expressed in Scripture. However, for those with eyes to see and ears to hear, they are evident in accounts such as the one before us. When Asaph wrote, “For God is my King of

old, working salvation in the midst of the earth” (Psa 74:12), the working of reference included various and sundry interventions in behalf of His people. That is one reason why it is written, “If God before us, who can be against us” (Rom 8:31).

While this applies to all of the children of God, it is particularly true of those who are engaged in His business. I do not know of any inspired expression that pledges such blessings will come to those with a divided heart (Hos 10:2), whose interests are slanted toward the earth

THREE DAYS LATER

“ 25:1 Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem.”

Remembering that God is working all things together for Paul’s good, and that Jesus is preparing Paul to bear witness to Him in Rome, we learn something of God’s manners in this text

It is fashionable these days to find

⇒ Abraham was promised an offspring through whose lineage all the world would be blessed (Gen 12:4), yet had to wait twenty-five years to successfully father the promised child (Gen 21:5).

⇒ Joseph was sent down to Egypt (Psa 105:17), “to save much people alive” (Gen 50:20). However, he had to wait for thirteen years for that mission to come to fruition – from when he was seventeen (Gen 37:2) until he was

Paul’s experience. What appears to the flesh as delays and unscheduled time-lags were actually God working out His purpose for Paul. It is not that God requires a lot of time to accomplish His will, and God forbid that we should entertain such a thought. **What appears to be delays is actually the trying of the faith of those involves.** Faith will stand the test of time, but men will not know this to be true unless they have to wait. All of those who were noted for going through delays kept the faith, and the faith kept them. Faith will stand the test of time, which is one of the most formidable tests of all.

Following are some of the supposed delays that have taken place in this incident alone.

It is fashionable these days to find people who are crisis-driven. That is, their lives lack objectivity. As a result of this lack, there is a tendency to hurry, rush, and seek to finish things quickly.

people who are crisis-driven. That is, their lives lack objectivity. As a result of this lack, there is a tendency to hurry, rush, and seek to finish things quickly. To be sure, there are times when things must be done immediately – like Jesus raising Peter to the surface of the water during a fierce storm (Matt 14:30-31). However, this is not always the way the Lord works.

⇒ Noah was commissioned to build an ark to the saving of his house, and the project extended over a period of one hundred and twenty years (Gen 6:3). Scripture describes that as a period of time in which God was waiting (1 Pet 3:20).

thirty (Gen 41:46).

⇒ Moses told Israel a Prophet would be raised up to whom, the people would hearken (Deut 18:15,18). Yet, that Prophet did not come until two thousand years later (Acts 3:22-23).

⇒ Isaiah prophesied that God would give Israel a child, and a Son upon whose shoulders the government would rest (Isa 9:6) – one whose name would be Emmanuel (Isa 7:14). Yet, that Holy Child was not born for over eight hundred years before that child was born (Matt 1:23).

Now we behold a similar manner in

PERIOD OF DELAY	LENGTH
Twelve days (24:11)	12
After certain days (24:24)	?
Two years (24:27)	720
After certain days (25:13)	?
Three days (25:1)	3
Ten days (25:6)	10
Certain days (25:13)	?
Many days (25:14)	?

After having arrived in Caesarea, Festus lingers for three days, then “ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem.” Note that once again a point is made of the high domain of Jerusalem, so that going to that city from the North, South, East, or West, involved an ascent.

At this point it is enough to say this

is a most accurate and consistent depiction of the “*Jerusalem that is above*” (Gal 4:26). As with the natural Jerusalem, entry into the

Jerusalem that is above involves an ascent – a going up: above the affairs of this world and life in it. Backsliding and all forms of

spiritual retrogression involve a descent – going down to lower realms that are defiled and covered with the veil of flesh.

THE JEWS DESIRE A FAVOR

“² Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,³ And desired favor against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.”

Now, after a rather lengthy period of time, the Jewish leaders are again standing before a Roman official. One might imagine that hatred for Paul was no longer so hot, and that time had tempered their feelings. But, alas, this was not the case at all.

THE HIGH PRIEST AND THE CHIEF OF THE JEWS INFORMED HIM

“Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him . . .” Other versions read, “brought charges against Paul,”^{NASB} “presented the charges,”^{NIV} “gave a report,”^{NRSV} “presented their case,”^{BBE} “laid out their case,”^{ESV} “presented their formal charges,”^{NAB} “made their accusations,”^{NLT} and “made manifest to him the things.”^{YLT}

It has been well over two years since the original charges had been presented against Paul. So far as the record is concerned, the Jewish leaders had no contact with the Roman officials during that period of time. Yet, their hatred of Paul had not diminished one whit. Even though Paul had not been among them during that time, bitterness and hatred continued to seethe in their hearts.

Now they stand before Festus, and present their case against Paul. He has come to Jerusalem rather than send for them to come to Caesarea. Apparently Tertullus did not present their case for them this time, as he did before Felix (Acts 24:1-2).

It is evident that time does not cause the world’s hatred to decrease. In the case of these opposing Jews, opposition to Paul continued with all of its initial fervor.

That is the nature of sin. It does not grow feeble with age, but becomes more and more robust. **That is one treason delayed repentance from, and**

confession of sin is so dangerous. A “root of bitterness” tends to spread, not only among those subjected to it, but within the hearts of those who entertain such notions.

THEY DESIRED A FAVOR AGAINST PAUL

“And desired favor against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem . . .” Other versions read, “requesting a concession against Paul,”^{NASB} “requested, as a favor to them against Paul,”^{NRSV} “Requesting Festus to give effect to their design against him,”^{BBE} and “Asking as a favor that he would have him brought to Jerusalem.”^{AMPLIFIED}

above forty Jews “banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul” (Acts 23:12). I assume they did not keep their vow, yielding to the need to eat and drink. However, their intention remained as strong as it ever was – perhaps stronger. Now they ask Festus to send Paul from Caesarea to Jerusalem. Should he consent to do so, they will set an ambush along the way and kill Paul – at least, that is what they purposed to do.

However, God is “for” Paul, which means that no one can effectively be “against” him (Rom 8:31). Even though forty

When the will, words, and works of men contradict, and even oppose, the purpose of God, it is just a matter of time – they will end up in the trash-heap of things that men were not able to do.

These men are attempting to manipulate Festus for their own personal interests. They are insinuating they will stand behind Festus, and make his rule more satisfying and secure. The Jews did the same things in a more blatant way when they were accusing Jesus before Pilate: “If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar” (John 19:12). Although, in our text, there is a slight difference in the request of the Jews, the principle under which they operated is still the same. Their own interests were primary, and all of their requests were shaped by them. There was no interest in justice or hearing and presenting the facts in the case. That is what sin does to those dominated by it.

LAYING WAIT TO KILL HIM

“ . . . laying wait in the way to kill him.” Other versions read, “lay in ambush,”^{NKJV} “setting an ambush,”^{NASB} and “planning an ambush.”^{NRSV}

More than two years before this,

men join hand in hand conspiring against this apostle of Christ, it is **they** that will be “punished,” not Paul (Prov 11:21; 16:5). Their purpose will fall to the ground! **God will make it fall to the ground!** When the will, words, and works of men contradict, and even oppose, the purpose of God, it is just a matter of time – they will end up in the trash-heap of things that men were not able to do.

Faith reckons on this reality, and thus sustains the weary soul during times of outward hardship. In my judgment all recovery proclaims, counseling groups, and how-to literature tend to cloud the fact that God sustains those who live by faith and walk in the Spirit. They teach professing believers to actually rely on the flesh, and thus push them into the area of flesh where effort of vain, and hopes are dashed upon the rocks of futility. Admittedly this is an enormously lucrative business enterprise. Yet, it is destined to ultimate failure, for it is not on The Foundation, nor is it an expression of God’s eternal purpose..

PAUL SHOULD BE KEPT IN CAESAREA

“⁴ But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither. ⁵ Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.”

As we consider this report, we must

⇒ **HE IS DOING HIS WILL.** *“And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?” (Dan 4:35).*

⇒ **HE IS WORKING ALL THINGS TOGETHER.**

All of these things are being done in the world, which is, on a lower level, under the control of Satan (1 John 5:19). They are often worked out in the crucible of conflict, where the odds seem to be against His people. However formidable foes may appear, they are utterly impotent before the Lord. He rules over them, and they are only His vassals.

look behind the scenes, for what is taking place is being done through Divine influences and workings. This global aspect of the working of the Lord is confirmed in several affirmations. Here is a sampling of them.

- ⇒ **HE IS WORKING SALVATION.** *“For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth” (Psa 74:12).*
- ⇒ **HE IS PERFECTING HIS PEOPLE.** *“The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: Thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of Thine own hands” (Psa 138:8).*
- ⇒ **HE IS WEIGHING THE SPIRITS.** *“... the LORD weigheth the spirits” (Prov 16:2).*
- ⇒ **HE IS TURNING MEN’S HEARTS.** *“The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will” (Prov 21:1).*
- ⇒ **HE IS FRUSTRATING THE FOOLISH.** *“That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of His messengers . . .” (Isa 44:25-26).*

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Rom 8:28).

⇒ **JESUS IS BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY.** *“For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb 2:10).*

All of these things are being done in the world, which is, on a lower level, under the control of Satan (1 John 5:19). They are often worked out in the crucible of conflict, where the odds seem to be against His people. However formidable foes may appear, they are utterly impotent before the Lord. He rules over them, and they are only His vassals.

When these realities are discerned, a tranquility settles over the soul that cannot be comprehended or explained by the wisdom of this world. When they are perceived, the one perceiving them conducts himself as Paul is doing. One senses **Paul himself** is actually in control of the situation, even though Festus imagines that he is the one who will decide the outcome.

FESTUS ANSWERS

“But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither . . .” Other versions read, *“was being kept in custody in Caesarea”^{NASB} “is being held,”^{NIV} “was kept under guard,”^{CJB} and “would keep Paul there.”^{GWN}*

With one brief word, Festus dismisses the words and the schemes of the Jews. He was going to return to Caesarea, and the proceedings would be held there. While he tarried briefly, Paul was in custody, and there really was no reason for bringing him to Jerusalem – even though that was the place where the complaint was raised against him. **Thus their plot to kill Paul en route from Caesarea to Jerusalem was cast down to the ground, just as though it did not even exist.** Paul had waited for the Lord, and God was honoring his faith, just as Isaiah promised: *“ . . . they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me” (Isa 49:23).*

Child of God, this is the *“children’s bread,”* being their heritage. This text is a remarkable example of the faithfulness of God and the effectiveness of *“the faith of God’s elect”* (Tit 1:1).

GO DOWN WITH ME

“ . . . Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.” Other versions read, *“let the influential men among you go there with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them prosecute him,”^{NASB} “Let some of your leaders come with me and press charges against the man there, if he has done anything wrong.”^{NIV} “let those of you who have the authority come down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them accuse him,”^{NRSV} and “let those who are in a position of authority and are influential among you go down with me, and if there is anything amiss or criminal about the man, let them so charge him.”*
AMPLIFIED

In a sense, he being in charge of the situation, the Jews have to bend to the desires of Festus, and not the contrary. Festus also insisted that they bring the most influential among them. The objective: to testify of any *“wickedness,” “wrong,” “amiss,”* or *“criminal”* in Paul. **It had to be something of social or political transgression, and not simply a matter of their Law.** Further, they could not come

at their leisure, or ahead of him, or after he had departed. **They were expected to**

travel with him in his return to Caesarea. That effectively thwarted the aim

of the Jews to set an ambush in which they could kill Paul.

HE TARRIED TEN DAYS

“⁶ And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought.”

After declaring his determination, that Paul must be tried in Caesarea, and following his orders that some of the chief men among the Jews accompany him to express their cause against Paul, Festus tarries in Jerusalem a few days longer. He was probably conducting some business there.

HE TARRIED AMONG THEM

“*And when he had tarried among them more than ten days . . .*” Other versions read, “*And after he had spent not more than eight or ten days among them,*”^{NASB} “*stayed in Jerusalem another eight or ten days*”^{LIVING} Thirty versions in my possession read, “*eight or ten days.*” Some precede these words with, “*not more than,*”^{NASB/NRSV/RSV/ASV/BBE/CSB/DARBY/RV/ESV/NET} “*at the most,*”^{CJB/GWN/NJB} “*no more than,*”^{DOUAY} “*about,*”^{NLT/MESSAGE} “*another.*”^{GNB}

The phrase “*among them*” indicates that he remained in Jerusalem, as opposed to staying with the Jews who requested that he have Paul transferred from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

Other versions read, “*no more than ten days.*”^{GENEVA} Still others read, “*more than ten days,*”^{KJV/NKJV/PNT/RWB/TNT/WEB/YLT/EMTV/LITV}

Thus, we have the following depictions of the period of time Festus remained in Jerusalem.

- ⇒ **More** than ten days.
- ⇒ **Not more** than eight or ten days.
- ⇒ **Eight** or ten days.
- ⇒ **At the most** eight or ten days.
- ⇒ **Another** eight or ten days.
- ⇒ **Eight** or ten days more.
- ⇒ **About** eight or ten days.

These varying views have been duly noted by the commentators. A sampling of their observations follows. “The Alexandrian copy, and three of Beza’s copies, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, “no more than eight or ten days.”^{JOHN GILL} “The Syriac reads it, “eight or ten.” The Vulgate, “not

more than eight or ten.” The Coptic, “eight or ten.” Griesbach supposes this to be the true reading, and has admitted it into the text.”^{ALBERT BARNES}

While this may appear to be something inconsequential, the way in which this verse is represented changes its meaning slightly. If the “*no more*” view is taken, then it suggests that Festus headed back to Caesarea sooner than he had intended, to avoid a continued subjection to the Jew’s request. If the “*more than*” view is taken, then he remained for a while without undue

AMPLIFIED “*took his place as judge,*”^{CEV} and “*Sat down in the judgment court.*”^{GNB}

Perhaps you have heard people refer to the “*judgement seat of Christ*” as the “*bema seat*” – a special place for believers only, where they will receive various rewards. Much is made of “the bema seat” and that it is not the same as the great white throne judgment. It is of more than passing interest that in this text the word translated “*judgment seat*” is, in fact the Greek word “*bema*” (βῆματος). In this case, it certainly

Thus we have a formal proceeding initiated, much like a case being tried in a court, under the guideline of certain rules and procedures. As in any civilized court, this is the proper way to establish the guilt or innocence of one that has been charged with a fault or crime.

concern about pressure from the Jews.

The latter view appears to me to be more in keeping with the government of God over the situation. I say this knowing that the same thing could be said about him leaving earlier than he expected, as though God saw to it that he was removed from the scene. However, seeing that Festus insisted that the Jews travel with him, this does not seem to me to be a likely scenario. Notwithstanding, this is not a cause worthy of contention. Here, I merely point out that the translation of Scripture does involve a perception of the nature of Divine workings. When there is a choice to be made between certain Greek texts, the one should be chosen that is most in keeping with what God has made known concerning Himself and His purpose.

HE WENT DOWN TO CAESAREA

“*. . . he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat . . .*” Other versions read, “*took his seat on the tribunal,*”^{NASB} “*convened the court,*”^{NIV} “*the judge’s seat,*”^{BBE} “*took his seat in court,*”^{CJB} “*the judge’s bench,*”^{CSB} “*open’s Paul’s trial,*”^{LIVING} “*the judgment bench,*”

was not a place for delivering rewards. Instead, it was a place where guilt or innocence was determined.

Thus we have a formal proceeding initiated, much like a case being tried in a court, under the guideline of certain rules and procedures. As in any civilized court, this is the proper way to establish the guilt or innocence of one that has been charged with a fault or crime.

Those who are familiar with the contemporary methods of the settling of church or religious institutional matters are keenly aware of the general absence of such an approach. Bigotry and prejudice play a large role in making determinations among professing Christians. **This is a sad condition that testifies to the dominance of the flesh.**

HE COMMANDED PAUL TO BE BROUGHT

“*. . . commanded Paul to be brought.*” Other versions read, “*order Paul to be brought,*”^{NASB} “*ordered that Paul be brought before him,*”^{NIV} “*sent for Paul,*”^{BBE}

“summoned Paul.”^{GWN}

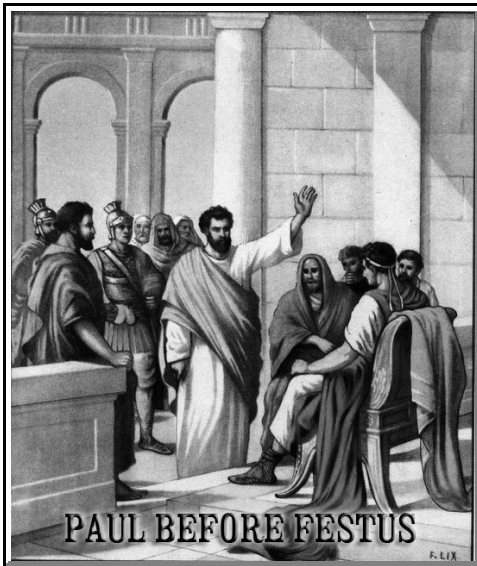
The language suggests that Paul was being held elsewhere, and had to be brought to the place where Festus’ judgment seat was located. We know that he was in the

area of a centurion that was ordered to allow him some liberty, and permit his acquaintances to minister to him, and care for his needs^{NIV} (Acts 24:23). This circumstance had continued for two consecutive years by Felix (Acts 24:27). Now,

for the first time, Festus will confront Paul personally, together with the Jews who had spoken against him, spouting false charges they had not managed to substantiate. However, all of this is being done under the administration of “the heavens” (Dan 4:26).

MANY GRIEVOUS COMPLAINTS

*“**And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.**”*



This is Paul’s fourth defense against the same trumped up charges. To this point none of the charges have been substantiated. To this point he has delivered a defense¹ to the crowd of angry Jews that had dragged him from the Temple (Acts 21:40-22:21),² the Jewish council (Acts 23:1-10), and³ before Felix (Acts 24:10-21). Now,⁴ he stands before Festus.

THE JEWS STOOD ROUND ABOUT

“And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about . . .” Other versions read, *“stood about him,”*^{NKJV} *“stood around him,”*^{NASB} *“surrounded him,”*^{NRSV} *“came around him,”*^{BBE} *“gathered around,”*^{NLT} and *“stood all around him,”*^{AMPLIFIED}

Were these Jews standing around Festus, or around Paul. I gather that the answer is “both.” Paul was standing before Festus, and the Jews were gathered around that area to make their case known.

Suffice it to say, it was a potentially intimidating situation. Those who were timorous would be tempted to make some kind of compromise to reduce the weight of the situation. But such a thing is not in the mind of Paul. He had embraced the Gospel he had preached, and obtained the faith that was resident in his doctrine. He is a man at peace with God, and can confidently say, *“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me”* (Heb 13:6).

THEY LAID MANY AND GRIEVOUS COMPLAINTS AGAINST PAUL

“ . . . and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul . . .” Other versions read, *“Many serious complaints,”*^{NKJV} *“many and serious charges,”*^{NASB} *“all sorts of serious statements,”*^{BBE} *“a lot of serious accusations,”*^{GWN} *“many and weighty charges,”*^{MRD} *“many serious accusations,”*^{NLT} and *“many grave accusations.”*^{AMPLIFIED}

The word translated *“grievous”* has the following lexical meaning. *“Heavy . . . burdensome . . . impressive . . . weighty, of great moment . . . cruel, unsparing,”*^{THAYER} and *“of important matters very significant, serious, momentous.”*^{FRIBERG}

I gather that the charges were weighty from a civil point of view, and that, if proved, they would justify the involvement and imposition of Festus. To this point, the charges that have been made against Paul include the following.

- ⇒ **TO THE JEWS.** They charged that Paul taught everywhere *“against the people [the Jews], and the law, and this place [the Temple].”* Also, that he *“brought Greeks into the Temple and hath polluted this holy place”* (Acts 21:28).
- ⇒ **BEFORE FELIX.** That Paul was *“a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes”* (Acts 24:5).

Perhaps in the intervening two

years these accusing Jews have been able to invent some new charges that would sound more pertinent to the case. If so, those charges are not specified. **However, the whole incident does confirm how flesh operates.** No child of God should be naive about the persistence and subtlety of the flesh and those dominated by it.

WHICH THEY COULD NOT PROVE

“ . . . which they could not prove.” Other versions read, *“which were not supported by the facts,”*^{BBE} *“were not able to prove,”*^{CSB} *“could make no plain proof,”*^{GENEVA} *“were unable to substantiate,”*^{MRD} and *“they couldn’t prove any of them.”*^{IE}

Paul’s accusers could not substantiate any of the charges they leveled against him. **All of them proved to be nothing more than opinions and imaginations.**

Erroneous allegations against the saints are the only kind of charges that should be leveled against the saints of God. Peter had this in mind when he wrote, *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ”* (1 Pet 3:16). Jesus also spoke to this matter with characteristic clarity: *“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake”* (Matt 5:11).

No believer has a right to suggest that people not look at what they can see them doing, insisting that they should not look at their flesh. That is loose thinking, and it is not becoming of one identified with Jesus Christ.

It is obvious that opinions, imaginations, and philosophizing are still very prominent in religion. We ought to

expect such things in heathen religions, for they are the products of such expressions. But when it comes to the Scriptures and things pertaining to life and godliness, the

theological woods are still filled with these aberrant modes of thought. **There are too many things being said about God, Jesus, and salvation, that cannot be**

proved by the Scriptures. Yet, they are being taught as though they were the unvarnished truth. This circumstance cannot be glossed.

HE ANSWERS FOR HIMSELF

“⁸ While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.”

Paul’s trial is under way, and we are exposed to the Roman approach to justice. Speaking as a man, and without consideration being given to God’s control of the situation, the approach was fair. The charges were made, and the party being charged was given an opportunity to reply to the charges. This was precisely the manner in while Pilate conducted the trial of Jesus (John 18:29-38). Yet Pilate convened his trial with a mind to please the Jews rather than to adjudicate a proper judgment. Of course, there was a higher agenda being served that day. As the disciples said later when they prayed concerning boldness to speak the Word, **“For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done”** (Acts 4:27-28).

My point here is that the Roman law itself was fair in its approach to charges, even though some who handled it were not. **Of course, the true God was also governing the trial of which we are now reading.** That is why the outcome of it will be different than the trial of the Lord Jesus, which was also governed by God..

HE ANSWERED FOR HIMSELF

“While he answered for himself. . .”

Other versions read, **“while Paul answered in his own defense,”**^{NASB} **“Then Paul made his offense,”**^{NIV} **“Paul said in his defense,”**^{NRSV} **Then Paul, in his answer to them, said,”**^{BBE} **“In reply Paul said,”**^{CJB} **“while Paul made the defense that,”**^{CSB} **“Paul answering for himself,”**^{DARBY} **“Paul argued in his defense,”**^{ESV} **“Forasmuch as he answered,”**^{GENEVA} **“meanwhile Paul maintained,”**^{MRD} **“in defending himself Paul said,”**^{NAB} **“Paul denied the charges,”**^{LIVING} and **“Paul continued to maintain.”**^{WILLIAMS}

How will Paul answer these **“many and grievous complaints?”** He has heard the charges against him, and has doubtless took note of the absence of any proof of them. They were allegations that His opponents **“could not prove.”** Under those circumstances, it is not necessary for Paul to again declare why he came to Jerusalem, and what he was doing when the Jews from Asia found him. He will simply transfer the responsibility to his accusers.

HE HAD NOT OFFENDED IN ANYTHING

“ . . . Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.” Other versions read, **“I have committed no offense,”**^{NASB} **I have done nothing wrong,”**^{NIV} **“I have in no way committed an offense,”**^{NRSV} **“Neither . . . have I sinned at all,”**^{ASV} **“have committed no offense- not against the Torah to which the Jews hold, not against the Temple, and not against the Emperor,”**

such a manner as to avoid offenses against both God and man (Acts 24:16). That was a confession that was fully supported by his manner of life. **Ponder some of the statements Paul made concerning how he lived.**

⇨ *“I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me”* (Acts 20:33-34).

⇨ *“If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ”* (1 Cor 9:12).

⇨ *“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should*

As I pondered this text, the thought occurred to me how few people could respond in this manner – that they had not offended in any way at all. It also was apparent to me that Paul had not embraced the “we-all-continue-to-sin” view that is currently being taught in the name of the Lord.

^{CJB} **“Neither . . . have I offended in anything,”**
^{DARBY} **“Paul maintained, that he had committed no offence,”**^{MRD} and **“Neither . . . have I offended in any way.”**^{AMPLIFIED}

As I pondered this text, the thought occurred to me how few people could respond in this manner – that they had not offended in any way at all. It also was apparent to me that Paul had not embraced the “we-all-continue-to-sin” view that is currently being taught in the name of the Lord. Paul conducted his life in

live of the gospel. But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void” (1 Cor 9:15).

⇨ *“What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all,*

that I might gain the more" (1 Cor 9:18-19).

⇒ "Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man" (2 Cor 7:2).

⇒ "And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself" (2 Cor 11:9).

⇒ "Behold, the third time I am ready to

come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children" (2 Cor 12:14).

⇒ "Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you?" (2 Cor 12:17).

Paul's life was lived in a manner that was consistent with the Gospel that he preached. Thus he spoke of counting all competing interests as nothing more than "dung," in order that he might "gain Christ" ^{NASB} (Phil 3:7-14). He acknowledged that he was "crucified with

Christ," and that the life he now lived "in the flesh" was lived by "faith in the Son of God" (Gal 2:20).

Actually, this is the only kind of life that is acceptable to God. There is no such thing as a salvation that allows the recipient to maintain selfish priorities, or to live solely for himself. Paul is an excellent example of someone who believed the Gospel, was sensitive to the requirements of the Lord, and lived in a manner that was consistent with them. It is this posture of life that enabled him to speak so confidently before all men, whether the general populous, religious leaders, or political dignitaries.

WILLING TO PLEASE THE JEWS

"⁹ But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?"

How does God work in the arena of conflict – where there are contradicting personalities. Ponder the kind of people that are present.

⇒ First, there are **the unbelieving Jews**, who are relentless in their determination to kill Paul. They appear to have the upper hand, for this trial is allowing for them to make charges against Paul.

appears to be at the great disadvantage. No one is present to speak in his behalf, and no one present is really seeking his exoneration of the charges placed against him.

According to appearance, everything is stacked against Paul. But faith has enabled him to rise above such an assessment. He is a servant of God, with whom "all things are possible" (Matt 19:26). That is more than a mere theological statement. It is a truth upon which the saved can reckon. That is precisely the reason Paul is able to think clearly, and in concert with the fact that Jesus promised him he would preach the Gospel in Rome.

NIV "desiring to gain favor with the Jews," ^{ASV} "desiring to get the approval of the Jews," ^{BBE} "desirous of obliging the Jews," ^{DARBY} "disposed to conciliate the favor of the Jews," ^{MRD} "wanting to please the Jews," ^{NLT} and "wishing to ingratiate himself with the Jews." ^{AMPLIFIED}

Political officials in all forms of government, even that of the United States, are often found catering to special interest groups in the hopes of gaining their favor. It is not that they are really interested in their cause. **Rather, they seek to gain their favor for their own political advantage.**

Festus, we find, is doing this very thing. He is desiring to do something special for the Jews in order that he might gain their favor, and have a good report among them as the kind of ruler they would like to continue.

Think of other rulers that aligned themselves against God and His people in order to placate the Jews.

⇒ **PILATE:** "And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified" (Mark 15:15).

⇒ **HEROD:** "And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also . . ." (Acts 12:2-3).

⇒ **FELIX:** "But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix,

Political officials in all forms of government, even that of the United States, are often found catering to special interest groups in the hopes of gaining their favor. It is not that they are really interested in their cause. Rather, they seek to gain their favor for their own political advantage.

⇒ Second, there is a **political ruler** who has no particular interest in Paul himself. As we will see, he is really a compromiser at heart, and his interest on judicial propriety is, at the very best, secondary.

⇒ Third, we have a **prisoner** who has been charged with acting in a criminal manner. He is a prisoner, is bound, and

Paul believed that word, and, as a result, the peace of God was keeping both his heart and his mind (Phil 4:7).

WILLING TO DO THE JEWS A PLEASURE

"But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul . . ." Other versions read, "willing to do the Jews a favor," ^{NKJV} "wishing to do the Jews a favor,"

willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound” (Acts 24:27).

Now, as the fourth person, Festus, joins this unholy group who, by virtue of its predilection to please the unbelieving Jews, had aligned itself against the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is a test of the will of man versus the will of God. How will those champions of the free will of natural men handle this incident? Are men really free to overturn the will of the Lord? And if they cannot do so, how can anyone postulate that their will is free? In this case you have the

Jews who have willed to take the life of Paul. And, in this episode alone, you have three political rulers who are quite willing to please the Jews. **How will all of this play out, and whose will is to triumph?** Behold how subtle Festus is in his statement.

WILT THOU GO UP TO JERUSALEM?

“ . . . and said, *Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?*” Other versions read, “*Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me on these charges?*,”^{NASB} and “*Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be put on trial [before the Jewish Sanhedrin] in my presence concerning these charges?*”^{AMPLIFIED}

The question of Festus is draped with hope – but it is pretentious. By saying he would be tried before the Sanhedrin, yet judged by himself, Festus is suggesting that everything would be fair. Of course, he did not know that the Jews had already determined to kill Paul while he was en route to Jerusalem. **Festus did not know this, but the Lord did. Thus the King of kings will impose his will in this situation.** Using the very words of his own faithful servant, he will cause the whole situation to be altered. He will frustrate the plans of the Jews, will give Festus something else to consider, and will turn his heart to agree with what Paul states. **That is Sovereignty at work!**

PAUL HAD DONE THE JEWS NO WRONG

“¹⁰ Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.”

Again, it is evident that Paul has a sound and peaceful mind. **There is a sense in which he was, as a king and priest unto God, in charge of the proceedings.** I understand that such a status cannot be guaranteed for every professing Christian, nor can it be codified, putting it in the reach of all. However, this is a possibility upon which faith can reckon. When the children of God are opposed, and even persecuted, they are not mere victims, and ought not to so regard themselves.

Paul did not ask for legal counsel, for he already had the highest Counselor on his side – and he knew it. **Every believer must strive to know when it is proper to seek human assistance, and when it is not.** There was a time when the people of God **could** go down to Egypt for help and protection. Abraham did it during the time of famine (Gen 12:10). Under the same kind of circumstances, however, it was **not** proper for Isaac to go down to Egypt during a famine (Gen 26:2). During yet another famine, it was proper for Jacob to depend upon Egypt for help (Gen 42:1-2). Later, the prophet Isaiah pronounced a woe to those who went “*down to Egypt for help*” (Isa 31:1). It was proper for Joseph, the husband of Mary, to flee with Mary and the Holy Child “*into Egypt*” (Matt 2:13-15).

Now, we will see a man who is believing and in subjection to Jesus, make

correct decisions about what is proper.

I STAND AT CAESAR’S SEAT

“*Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat . . .*” Other versions read, “*Caesar’s tribunal,*”^{NASB} “*Caesar’s court,*”^{NIV} “*emperor’s tribunal,*”^{NRSV} “*seat of Caesar’s authority,*”^{BBE} “*court of the*

Other versions read, “*ought to be tried,*”^{NASB} “*should be tried,*”^{NRSV} “*where it is right for me to be judged,*”^{BBE} “*must be tried,*”^{GWN} “*where it behoveth me to be judged,*”^{YLT} and “*it behoveth me to be judged,*”^{WEYMOUTH}

Because this was Caesar’s tribunal, it would not have been right to hand Paul

This is the effect of living “unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” This is evidence that Christ was living in Paul, and the life he was living was not viewed as his own. This kind of thinking is the result of one yielding his body as a living sacrifice to God, and coming to know “what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”

Emperor,” and “*official Roman court.*”^{NLT}

The word translated “*Caesar’s*” is **Καίσαρος**, which is lexically defined as “*Caesar* (properly, the surname of Julius Caesar, which being adopted by Octavianus Augustus and his successors afterward became an appellative, and was appropriated by the Roman emperors as a part of their title.”^{THAYER}

Paul was being tried under the jurisdiction of Caesar and the courts of Rome. Although this was fully known by Festus, Paul states it plainly, for he is going to found a plea upon that fact.

WHERE I OUGHT TO BE JUDGED

“ . . . *where I ought to be judged . . .*”

over to a Jewish court – the Sanhedrin. Being familiar with Roman law, Paul knew this. Festus knew it also. That is why he asked Paul if he would consent to such a procedure. **He knew he could not impose that circumstance on Paul without violating Roman law.**

However, it ought to be remembered that although Paul knew this, **he was motivated by something else.** The Lord Jesus had promised him he would testify of Him in Rome (Acts 23:11). That promise is what was driving Paul – not a fear of a trial in Jerusalem. He had no doubt remembered what his nephew had heard when the Jews were plotting to kill him on

As it is written, “Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” By saying that all “belong” to us, Paul is confirming that, properly approached, we can be advantaged by them all. None of them are ultimately intended to make us fall, or pull us away from Christ.

the road. But his remembrance of the promise of the Lord had the greatest constraining power.

This is the effect of living *“unto Him which died for them, and rose again”* (2 Cor 5:15). This is evidence that Christ was living in Paul, and the life he was living was not viewed as his own (Gal 2:20). This kind of thinking is the result of one yielding his body as a living sacrifice to God, and coming to know *“what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”* (Rom 12:2).

It is one thing to theoretically know these facts, but it is quite another to live in conformity with them. **Faith is the enabling factor in all of this.**

Although Paul was primarily a citizen of heaven (Phil 3:20), he knew that, in Christ, *“all things”* belonged to him. As it is written, *“Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s”* (1 Cor 3:23). By saying that

all *“belong”* to us, **Paul is confirming that, properly approached, we can be advantaged by them all.** None of them are ultimately intended to make us fall, or pull us away from Christ. In the text before us, things that belonged to Paul included *“the world,” “life,” “death,” “things present,”* and *“things to come.”* **He thus seized them, using them to bring legitimate advantages in the carrying out of the will of God.** It appears that very few people are aware of this facet of the Kingdom. However, there is no need for it to be so. The eyes of understanding can be opened to see and appropriate these benefits.

AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE NOT WRONGED THE JEWS

“ . . . to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.” Other versions read, *“I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you also very well know,”*^{NASB} *“I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you are well able to see,”*^{BBE} *“To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourselves know very well,”*^{ESV} *“to Jews I did no unrighteousness, as thou dost also very well know,”*^{YLT} and *“To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you*

know better [than your question implies].”
AMPLIFIED

Had it been proven that Paul had, in fact, wronged the Jews in any way, it would have been proper for him to be tried in their court. However, if this was not true, it would have been out of order. Paul is now being tried as a Roman citizen charged with crimes that impacted upon that citizenship. It is right, therefore, that Paul brings up this matter of correctitude. **It is never right to do wrong, and it would be wrong to conduct these hearings in Jerusalem.**

Although the charges had originated in Jerusalem, the captain, Lysias, had already heard all of the evidence presented against Paul. He, as a Roman authority, concluded that the Jews did not have a legitimate case against Paul. He had therefore had Paul transferred to Caesarea, where the case would be resumed. For Festus to have returned Paul to Jerusalem, he would have been discounting the conclusions of a Roman authority. That itself would have been a crime. Thus, Festus approaches this matter with understandable caution – **and behind it all, God is working things out.**

Paul states that Festus is well aware that he has not wronged the Jews. It is not that he had been involved in the case, or was present when the original charges were made. Nor does this statement suggest that he had an understanding of Paul himself, his ministry, and his manner of life. Rather, he was aware of the letter from Lysias to his predecessor. Felix had probably spoken to Festus about Paul also. And now he had heard the charges of the Jews, and discerned they could not prove their allegations. The text also appears to include the idea of Festus knowing these things better than it appeared. Yet, God’s will in the matter will be done.

I APPEAL TO CAESAR

“¹¹ For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.”

Once again, I want to point out who is actually in charge of this hearing. Paul not only sounds as though he is in control of things, but there is a sense in which he is, even though he is a prisoner.

Just as surely as he will be given charge of the ship on which was a prisoner (Acts 27:22-23), so there is a sense in which he is in charge of this situation. He was announcing the determined will of God, even though it took the form of what appeared to be a suggestion.

I REFUSE NOT TO DIE

“For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die . . .” Other versions read, *“I*

do not object to dying,”^{NJKV} *“I do not refuse to die,”*^{NASB} *“I am not trying to escape death,”*^{NRSV} *“I am ready for death,”*^{BBE} *“I do not deprecate dying,”*^{DARBY} *“I don’t reject the idea of dying,”*^{GWN} and *“I do not beg off and seek to escape death.”*^{AMPLIFIED}

Paul calls for any proof that he is a lawbreaker, and has committed any offense that is worthy of death. He says this because the Jews have, in fact, called for his death. When the captain Lysias gave him the right

to speak to the Jews, they responded, “it is not fit that he should live” (Acts 22:22). Later, Festus will say to Agrippa, “all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer” (Acts 25:24). The Jews had charged him with capital offenses, and were seeking his death. **He was not brought there to deal with some minor demeanor.**

In Paul’s words, we see that he condones the death penalty when properly administered. He knows why government has been established by God, for the political ruler is “the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Rom 13:4). His administration includes the use of the “sword,” which he does not bear in vain. That is, it is not just for looks, but for the execution of justice.

Those who, in the name of Jesus, oppose capital punishment will have to give an account of their words, since God Himself is the one who authored this mode of punishment (Gen 9:6). Of course, that is not the punishment for every infraction, but it is for some. That is why Paul did not refuse to die if he had done anything “worthy of death.”

The punishment of the wicked, whether by death, imprisonment, stripes, etc, is not only for the offender. **It is also for the sake of others, who may be tempted to be aggressive to break the law.** Speaking of a wicked person who was put to death, the Lord said through Moses, “And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously” (Deut 17:13). Again, speaking of the same kind of circumstance Moses said, “And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you” (Deu 19:20). When a disobedient child was stoned, Moses said, “And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear” (Deut 21:21).

I realize there are those who affirm that capital punishment is not a deterrent to the committing of that crime. In so saying, they have disagreed with God. Of course, God will be justified in all of His sayings, and overcome all of His critics (Rom 3:4).

IF NONE OF THESE THINGS ARE

TRUE

“ . . . but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them.” Other versions read, “no man can hand me over to them,”^{NASB} “No man has the right to hand me over to them,”^{NIV} “no one can give me up and make a present of me [give me up freely] to them.”^{AMPLIFIED}

Paul applies the pressure where it ought to be placed. When charges are made against an individual there is a moral obligation to substantiate those claims.

There is also a corresponding responsibility placed on all believers to live above reproach. It is not common in this day of Indian rubber theology to hear a point being made of this. It is quite common to hear godly living spoken of as though it was a kind of goal that remains very distant in the future. In the meantime, transgressors are placated with mindless chatter that reminds them we are all sinners, sin habitually, and are plagued with hurts,

goodness and righteousness and truth); Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord” (Eph 5:9-10).

⇨ **BE BLAMELESS AND HARMLESS.** “Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Phil 2:15).

⇨ **YOUR WHOLE SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY BE PRESERVED BLAMELESS.** “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess 5:23).

⇨ **BE FOUND SPOTLESS AND BLAMELESS.** “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pet 3:14).

There is also a corresponding responsibility placed on all believers to live above reproach. It is not common in this day of Indian rubber theology to hear a point being made of this. It is quite common to hear godly living spoken of as though it was a kind of goal that remains very distant in the future.

hangups, and habits. No one is really expected to be free from such things, but are rather told that God is eternally longsuffering while they work on their moral failures. Rather than mortifying their members that are upon the earth, as they are told to do (Col 3:5), and as those who are in Christ really do (Gal 5:24), they are encouraged to manage the flesh as best they can, expecting to fail now and then. However, the King has spoken on this matter, and we do well to hear it.

⇨ **BE HOLY:** “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet 1:15-16).

⇨ **WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT.** “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all

⇨ **ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS.** “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Pet 2:11).

The professing Christian who does not take these admonitions seriously will not be able to remain in the love of God and Christ. Jesus said, “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him” (John 14:21). Again it is written, “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him,

and make Our abode with him”(John 14:23). Yet again He said, “If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love”(John 15:10).

The person who ignores these sayings, regardless of their profession, has revealed they do not love the Lord Jesus or keep of His commandments. They may salve their conscience by saying

and had confirmed it by keeping His word, Jesus was manifesting Himself to Paul, and He and the Father have taken up their abode in him.

I APPEAL TO CAESAR

“... I appeal unto Caesar.” Other versions read, “I appeal to the emperor,”^{NRSV} “Let my cause come before Caesar,”^{BBE} “I appeal my case to the emperor!,”^{GWN} and “I announce an appeal to Caesar.”^{MRD}

This is an example of Divine direction, realized as one is living by faith and walking in the Spirit. There is enough said about this to encourage the trusting ones, but not enough to lead to the imagination that those who live after the flesh will be blessed with guidance from above.

⇨ “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in His way” (Psa 37:23).

⇨ “A man’s heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps” (Prov 16:9).

⇨ “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (Isa 30:21).

My point here is simply this: Paul is able to conduct himself in this trial with spiritual poise because he had really lived for Jesus, has really crucified the flesh, and is really living by faith. Because he loves the Lord Jesus, and had confirmed it by keeping His word, Jesus was manifesting Himself to Paul, and He and the Father have taken up their abode in him.

they believe in Jesus, and that is really enough. But they have only deceived themselves.

My point here is simply this: Paul is able to conduct himself in this trial with spiritual poise because he had really lived for Jesus, has really crucified the flesh, and is really living by faith. Because he loves the Lord Jesus,

Paul recognizes that Festus, together with his predecessor Felix, are not able to satisfactorily conduct this trial. He also knows that Jesus has affirmed he is going to testify of Christ in Rome as he did in Jerusalem. In my judgment, this is the factor that most compelled Paul to appeal to Caesar. He was seeking more than civil rights or being cleared from the charges made against him.

These poignant expressions confirm that those who are directed come to the point where they know what to do. Their faith perceives the direction in which the Lord is leading, and the Spirit gives them words appropriate to their circumstances. In the text before us, the steps of Paul were directed to a political ruler that would play a key role in getting Paul to Rome. Paul recognized the hand of the Lord and immediately appealed to Caesar. Oh, the blessedness of living unto the Lord rather than for self!

UNTO CAESAR THOU SHALT GO

“¹² Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.”

Here we are witnessing the turning of a ruler’s heart (Prov 21:1). Festus had a predilection to do a special favor for the Jews. Yet, out of his own mouth he sends Paul to another area of the world, where they would not have access to him. Oh, the joy of having acquaintance with the God of heaven through Jesus Christ. **He is everything He has represented Himself to be, and that the Spirit has moved holy men to say about Him.** He is worthy of a trust that liberates the soul from the tyranny of fretting and worrying.

WHEN HE HAD CONFERRED WITH THE COUNCIL

“Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered . . .” Other versions read, “when he had conferred with his council,”^{NASB} “having had a discussion with the Jews,”^{BBE} “after talking with his advisers,”^{CJB} “conferred with his counselor,”^{MRD} “Then spake Festus with deliberation ,”^{TNT} and “consulted with the [men who formed his] council.”^{AMPLIFIED}

The various versions are not agreed on this verse. Some specifically state that the ones with whom Festus conferred were the Jews (BBE, LITV). Others say it was his own political council (NASB, NIV, NRSV, RSV, CSV, CSB, ESV, GWN, MRD, NAB, NAS, NAU, NET, NIB, NJB, NJB, NLT, LIVING, IE, CEV, GNB, MESSAGE). Some are neutral, referring simply to “the council” (KJV, NKJV, ASV, DARBY, DOUAY, ERV, GENEVA, PNT, RWB, WEB, YLT, WEYMOUTH, WILLIAMS, MONTGOMERY, WYCLIFFE, EMTV, INTERLINEAR).

It appears to me that the council of reference was a political one, not the Jewish Sanhedrin, as indicated by some versions. The text does not specify the council of reference, but merely refers to it as “the council.” It is not likely that he conferred with the Jewish council. He had already turned down their suggestion to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem. It is unreasonable to think that he conferred with them about sending Paul to Rome. He no doubt conferred with his own counsel to ensure that he was not violating any aspect of Roman law.

UNTO CAESAR THOU SHALT GO

“Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.” Other versions read, “to the Emperor you will go,”^{NRSV} and “you will go to the Emperor.”^{CJB}

As a citizen of Rome, Paul has claimed his legal rights, and Festus will not be able to grant the Jews their favor, for it would be in contradiction of Roman law. From the viewpoint of Herod, sending Paul to Rome relieved him of the responsibility of trying him. Now he would not have to hear the conflicting testimonies, or make special concessions to prejudiced Jews. However,

that was only according to appearance. Behind the scenes, and in the perception of Paul, several things were accomplished.

- ⇒ Paul would be put out of reach of the Jews.
- ⇒ He would not have to return to Jerusalem and listen to further charges.

- ⇒ He would now be on his way to Rome to fulfill the determination of King Jesus.
- ⇒ He would be granted free passage all the way.
- ⇒ He was granted governmental protection throughout the trip.

CONCLUSION

We are being exposed to the details of one event in Paul's life. The particulars that are involved in this event are an account of how God worked things together to get Paul to Rome. He could have moved him there like He did Philip to Azotus (Acts 8:40). Instead, He chose to work by orchestrating a series of events that stretched over a period of well over two years – and we have not yet got to the voyages by ship. In order to appreciate the meticulous control God exercised throughout this whole affair, consider the following sequence of events.

hands on him (Acts 21:27).

- ⇒ Against the advise of the brethren, Paul determines to go to Jerusalem (Acts 12:13-14).
- ⇒ He arrives in Jerusalem, and the brethren receive him gladly (Acts 21:17).
- ⇒ § **PAUL REPORTS THE THINGS GOD HAD DONE THROUGH HIS MINISTRY.** Paul goes in to James, and, in the presence of all the elders, reports the things God had wrought through his ministry (Acts 21:19).
- ⇒ James tells Paul of false reports that have been circulated among the Jews concerning his ministry (Acts 21:21-22).
- ⇒ Paul is advised to join with four Jewish men in the completion of their vows in order to confirm to the Jews that what they had heard about Paul was not true (Acts 21:23-25).
- ⇒ Paul purifies himself with four men and enters the Temple, signifying when an offering would be presented for the completion of the vow (Acts 21:26).
- ⇒ When the seven days for the completion of the vow were almost completed, some Jews from Asia see Paul in the Temple, and stirred up all of the people, laying

- ⇒ The Jews from Asia charge that Paul has been teaching everywhere against the Jews, against the Law, and against the Temple (Acts 21:28a).
- ⇒ The Jews charge that Paul is defiling the Temple by bringing Greeks into it (Acts 21:28b).

- ⇒ Confusion erupted with some Jews saying one thing, and some another (Acts 21:34a).
- ⇒ **ADVERSARIAL CONDITIONS ARE ABORTED.** When he could not ascertain for certain the answer to his questions, the captain took Paul to the military barracks (Acts 21:34b).

We are being exposed to the details of one event in Paul's life. The particulars that are involved in this event are an account of how God worked things together to get Paul to Rome. He could have moved him there like He did Philip to Azotus (Acts 8:40). Instead, He chose to work by orchestrating a series of events that stretched over a period of well over two years – and we have not yet got to the voyages by ship.

- ⇒ The whole city of Jerusalem is moved, the people ran together, dragged Paul out of the Temple, and shut the Temple doors (Acts 21:30).
- ⇒ The Jews set out to kill Paul (Acts 21:31a).
- ⇒ **A MILITARY LEADER HEARS OF THE ACTIVITIES.** News of the tumult came to a chief captain of Rome (Acts 21:31b).
- ⇒ **THE ACTIVITIES OF THE JEWS ARE INTERRUPTED.** The captain immediately takes some soldiers, stopped Paul from being beaten, and took him into custody (Acts 21:32-33a).
- ⇒ The captain demanded to know who Paul was, and what he had done (Acts 21:33b).

- ⇒ **PROTECTION OF PAUL ENFORCED.** Soldiers protected Paul from the violence of the people, and he came to the stairs leading into the barracks (21:35).
- ⇒ The multitude of people had followed Paul crying out, "Away with him!" (Acts 21:36).
- ⇒ Paul asks to speak to the chief captain, who makes known that he thought Paul was a certain Egyptian who had made an uproar in Jerusalem (Acts 21:37-38).
- ⇒ Paul makes known that he is a Roman citizen, and asks for permission to speak to the people (Acts 21:39).
- ⇒ **AN UNPREDICTABLE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE.** Paul is granted permission, and begins to speak to the people in the Hebrew tongue (Acts 21:40).

⇒ § **PAUL IS GRANTED THE RIGHT TO SPEAK TO HIS ACCUSERS, TESTIFYING OF HIS CALLING AND MISSION.** Paul delivers his first defense to the people, identifying who he was, and testifying to his conversion (22:1-16).

⇒ § **PAUL TESTIFIES OF THE LORD'S PERSONAL WORD TO HIM.** He tells of being in the Temple later, and of a special word that was delivered to him while he was in a trance (Acts 22:17-21).

⇒ Upon hearing Paul say that Jesus said he would be sent to the Gentiles, the Jews begin to cast of their clothes and throw dust into the air (Acts 22:22-23).

⇒ □ **PROTECTION OF PAUL FORCEFULLY IMPLEMENTED.** The chief captain commands Paul to be brought into the barracks where he would be examined by scourging (Acts 22:24).

⇒ As they were binding Paul with thongs, he asked the centurion if it was lawful to scourge a man who was a Roman when he was uncondemned (Acts 22:25).

⇒ The centurion told the chief captain to be careful what he was doing – that Paul was a Roman citizen (Acts 22:26).

⇒ □ **THE SCHEDULE SCOURGING OF PAUL IS ABORTED.** When he had verified that Paul was a Roman citizen, the captain terminated the scheduled examination by scourging (Acts 22:27-29).

⇒ □ **CONVENIENCE IS MANDATED FOR PAUL THE PRISONER.** The next day Paul was loosed from his bonds, and the Jewish elders and council was called, with Paul being set before them (Acts 22:30).

⇒ § **PAUL TESTIFIES OF THE MAINTENANCE OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE BEFORE GOD.** Paul begins to speak to the council, and the high priest commanded him to be struck on the mouth. Paul responded and a brief exchange took place (Acts 23:1-5).

⇒ § **PAUL TESTIFIES OF THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION.** Paul discerns that part of the council was Pharisees and part Sadducees. Knowing they were divided, he said he had been called into question because of his hope of the resurrection (Acts 23:6).

⇒ A tumult resulted because the

Sadducees did not accept the resurrection of the dead, or the existence of angels and spirits, while the Pharisees did accept these things (Acts 23:7-9).

⇒ □ **PAUL FORCEFULLY REMOVED FROM DANGER.** The dissension was so great that the captain had Paul removed by force, placing him inside the barracks (Acts 23:10).

⇒ □ **THE LORD STANDS BY PAUL, COMFORTING HIM.** The next night, the Lord stood by Paul, telling him to be of good cheer, that he would testify of Him in Rome, just as he had in Jerusalem (Acts 23:11).

⇒ When it was day, forty Jews bound themselves under a curse to not eat or drink until they had killed Paul (Acts 23:12-13).

⇒ These forty men went to the Jewish council and told them their plans, telling the leaders to ask the captain to bring Paul down so they could inquire of him. Then, they said, they would kill him (Acts 23:14-15).

⇒ □ **THE SECRET PLANS OF THE ENEMY OVERHEARD.** Paul's nephew overhears the plot, and enters into the barracks, telling Paul of the plans of the Jews (Acts 23:16).

⇒ □ **A CENTURION LISTENS AND GIVES HEED TO PAUL.** Paul calls one of the centurions and tells him to take his nephew to the captain because he had something to tell him (Acts 23:17).

⇒ □ **A BOY IS TAKEN TO THE ONE WHO CAN STOP THE PLANS OF THE JEWS.** The centurion took the boy to the captain and told him Paul had asked him to bring his nephew to tell him something (Acts 23:18).

⇒ □ **AN ARMY CAPTAIN GIVES HEED TO THE BOY'S ADVICE.** The captain took the boy aside privately and asked what he had to say. The boy told him of the plot, and then admonished the captain not to yield to the Jews' request. The captain received the boy's words, and told him not to tell anyone that he had told the captain these things (Acts 23:19-21).

⇒ □ **PAUL ESCORTED TO CAESAREA WITH A MILITARY GROUP OF 470 MEN.** The captain quickly dispatched two centurions to gather two hundred soldiers, seventy

horsemen, and two hundred spearmen, and take Paul to Felix the governor. They were also to provide mounts for Paul so he could be safely conducted to the governor (Acts 23:23-24).

⇒ □ **A MILITARY CAPTAIN THINKS TO WRITE AN INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO A GOVERNOR.** The captain wrote a letter to Felix, explaining the whole situation (Acts 23:25-30).

⇒ □ **A MILITARY ESCORT TAKES PAUL ALL THE WAY TO CAESAREA.** The soldiers took Paul and began their journey, stopping at Antipatris, then continuing to Caesarea with the soldiers returning to the barracks (Acts 23:31-32).

⇒ Upon arriving in Caesarea, they delivered both the letter and Paul to Felix (Acts 23:33).

⇒ When Felix had read the letter, he asked from what province Paul had come. Hearing that it was Cilicia, he consented to hear the case (Acts 23:34-35a).

⇒ Felix commanded that Paul be kept in Herod's judgment hall (Acts 23:35b).

⇒ Five days later Ananias the high priest and the elders showed up with Tertullus, who presented the charges against Paul (Acts 24:1-9).

⇒ § **PAUL PROVIDES THE DETAILS INVOLVED IN HIS RETURN TO JERUSALEM, AND OF HIS HOPE.** Upon a sign from Felix, Paul presented his defense (Acts 24:10-21).

⇒ □ **A SCHEDULED HEARING IS FORTHRIGHTLY DISMISSED BY FELIX.** After hearing Paul's defense, Felix dismissed the hearing, saying he would wait until Lysias the captain came. Then he would have a fuller picture of the circumstances (Acts 24:22).

⇒ □ **SPECIAL PRIVILEGES ARE VOUCHSAFED TO PAUL THE PRISONER.** Felix commands Paul to be guarded by a centurion, yet given some liberty, with his acquaintances being allowed to minister to him (Acts 24:23).

⇒ □ **FELIX SCHEDULES A TIME WHEN HE CAN HEAR PAUL CONCERNING FAITH IN CHRIST, HIS WIFE ALSO BEING PRESENT.** After certain days, Felix returned with his wife, and sent for Paul, hearing him concerning the faith in Christ (Acts 24:24).

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| <p>⇒ § PAUL REASONS WITH FELIX CONCERNING PIVOTAL SPIRITUAL MATTERS. Paul reasons with Felix of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come – causing Felix to “<i>tremble</i>” (Acts 24:25a).</p> <p>⇒ Felix dismissed Paul, saying he would call for him when he had a convenient season (Acts 24:25b).</p> <p>⇒ § MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES ARE GIVEN FOR PAUL TO SPEAK TO FELIX. Thinking Paul would offer him a bribe, Felix often called for Paul “<i>and communed with him</i>” (Acts 24:26).</p> <p>⇒ As a favor to the Jews, Felix left Paul bound in prison for two years (Acts 24:27b).</p> <p>⇒ A full two years later, Festus replaces Felix and comes to Jerusalem (Acts 25:1).</p> <p>⇒ Like lions coming in for the kill, the high priest and the chief of the Jews inform Festus “<i>against Paul,</i>” asking him to have Paul brought to Jerusalem (Acts 25:2-3a).</p> <p>⇒ The Jews sought to kill Paul while he was on the way to Jerusalem (Acts 25:3b).</p> <p>⇒ ☐ A RULER WHO WAS SEEKING THE FAVOR OF THE JEWS DENIES THEIR REQUEST. Festus</p> | <p>denies the request, saying that Paul “<i>should be kept in Caesarea</i>” (Acts 25:4).</p> <p>⇒ ☐ FESTUS DEMANDS THAT THE JEWS WHO ASKED HIM TO BRING PAUL TO JERUSALEM ACCOMPANY HIM TO CAESAREA. Festus says he will leave for Caesarea shortly, and that the most capable among the Jews should accompany him, presenting their accusations formally when they arrive (Acts 25:5).</p> <p>⇒ After remaining in Jerusalem for more than ten days, he returns to Caesarea with the accompanying Jews, and calls for Paul to be brought (Acts 25:6).</p> <p>⇒ Upon Paul’s arrival, the Jews surround him and present their charges, none of which were accompanied by proof (Acts 25:7).</p> <p>⇒ § PAUL BOLDLY ANNOUNCES HE HAS COMMITTED NO OFFENSE. Paul answers for himself, stating he had committed no offence against the Jews, the Temple, or Caesar (Acts 25:8).</p> <p>⇒ Willing to make a concession to the Jews, Festus asked Paul if he was willing to go to Jerusalem to be tried before Festus himself (Acts 25:9).</p> <p>⇒ Paul refuses, declaring he was standing in Caesar’s court, where he ought to be judged (Acts 25:10a).</p> | <p>⇒ Paul reaffirms that he has done nothing against the Jews, which, he said, Festus knew very well (Acts 25:10b).</p> <p>⇒ Paul states that he is willing to die if he has done anything worthy of death, but if such was not the case, he appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:11).</p> <p>⇒ ☐ EVEN THOUGH HE WAS SEEKING TO PLEASE THE JEWS, FESTUS AGREES TO SEND PAUL TO ROME. Festus confers with his own council, and agrees with Paul’s assessment saying, “<i>unto Caesar thou shalt go</i>” (Acts 25:12).</p> <p>I have listed sixty-nine segments of this whole episode. Hundreds of people have been involved, including groups of Jews (70 in the Sanhedrin and 40 who conspired to kill Paul), religious and political rulers, an army, Paul’s nephew, and acquaintances that ministered to Paul during his two-year confinement.</p> <p>Where it is obvious that some kind of intervention took place, I have preceded the point with a ☐. Those times when Paul was able to speak or testify have been preceded by a §.</p> <p>Now, I ask you, who but God could cause such a diversity of things – sixty-nine of them – to work out for the fulfillment of His own purpose and the good of Paul? Truly, this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes!</p> |
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Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 7/2/10. We will continue our current series of lessons on the book of Acts. The ninety-eighth lesson will cover verses 13 through 27 of the twenty-fifth chapter: “PAUL PRESENTED TO AGRIPPA.” Paul now confronts Agrippa. The offence with which he has been charged has thus far moved him to appear before a Roman captain named Lysias, the Jewish council (Sanhedrin), Felix, Festus, and now Agrippa. In this appearance, Agrippa arrives in Caesarea with his wife, Bernice. While meeting with Festus, he was told of the case of Paul. Agrippa replied that he would like to hear Paul for himself, and a time was set for this to take place. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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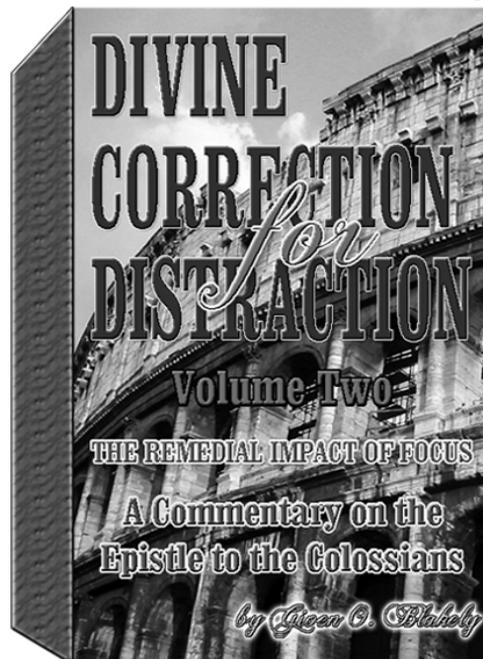
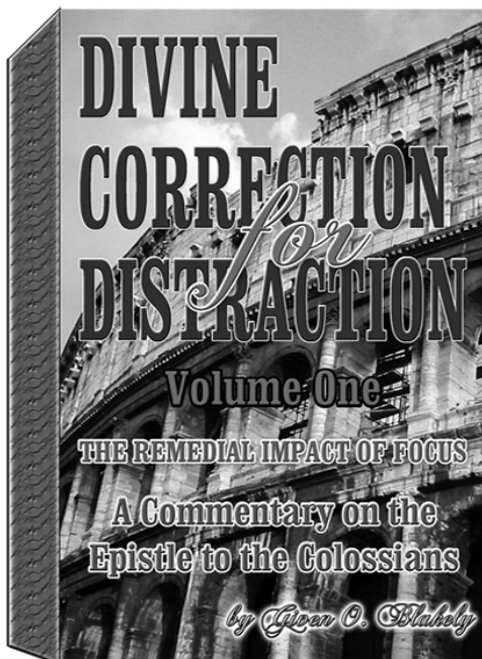
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