

# Abounding Grace Christian Church

## The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Church – Part 72

### I. Exposition of Chapter Twenty Four (Continued).

#### A. Verses 22-27 – Felix’s Response to Paul’s Defense.

1. Verse 22 – “...when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of the Way...” – There are several reasons why Felix might have had accurate knowledge of “the Way”. Dr. Craig Keener asserts: **“Felix’s knowledge about the Way (24:22), shared with his brother-in-law Agrippa I (cf. 26:26), is inevitable given the movement’s size (21:20). Perhaps even some of Felix’s own Caesarean soldiers were sympathizers (cf. earlier 10:1–7).”**<sup>1</sup>

2. Verse 22 – “When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case.” – There is no evidence that Felix ever sent for Lysias. It seems that Felix was procrastinating, possibly to see if Paul would pay him to be released (verse 26).

3. Verse 23 – “So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let him have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him.” – The fact that he gave Paul such freedom in this “house arrest” situation is because he, no doubt, knew Paul was innocent of the charges. Grant Osborne writes: **“Felix is faced with a tricky case. He could have executed Paul but like the tribune knows that he is innocent. He could release Paul but also knows the Jews and their leaders will go crazy if he frees him.”**<sup>2</sup>

4. Verse 24-25 – Paul preaches the Gospel to Felix and his wife Drusilla.

a. Verse 24 – It seems either Felix wanted to hear about “...the faith in Christ”, or his wife, Drusilla did. Concerning his wife, Dr. Bob Utley writes:

**“She was the youngest, and apparently beautiful, daughter of Herod Agrippa I and the sister of Bernice and Agrippa II. She was Felix’s third wife, whom he took from the Azizus, the King of Emesa (cf. Josephus, *Antiq.* 20:7:2). She was 16 years of age according to Josephus in his *Antiq.* 19:9:1, when Felix took her for his wife.”**<sup>3</sup>

b. Verse 25 – Paul “reasoned” (“to address, to make a speech<sup>4</sup>) about three things; “righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid...” Donald Stamps in his notes in the Fire Bible writes:

**“As Paul speaks to Felix about faith in Jesus Christ and about ‘righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment,’ Felix becomes frightened. This relates to Jesus’ words that when the Holy Spirit comes, he ‘will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment’ (John 16:8). People’s spiritual salvation depends on the faithful, bold and accurate communication of God’s truth and the message of Christ, which allow God’s Spirit to produce conviction in a person who is not right with God. ‘Conviction’ means that the Spirit will expose a person’s sin and convince him or her of the need to surrender to Christ in order to have a right relationship with God.”**<sup>5</sup>

c. Verse 26 – Here we see Felix’s hope that Paul would offer him a bribe. We also see the integrity of the Apostle Paul in that he would not offer a bribe in order to be set free. Kevin Conner provides us with an overall picture of Felix:

**“Felix is a typical character study of the unregenerate man who:**

1. Has knowledge of The Way.
2. Hears the Faith in Christ. The Word.
3. Is convicted of sin, of righteousness and judgment.
4. Trembles with guilt.
5. Yet procrastinates, looking for another more convenient season to call for the Word of God.
6. Has a hardened, covetous heart after the god of Mammon, which is money.
7. Yesterday is gone forever. Tomorrow for you may never come. God only gives you ‘Today.’  
**TODAY – if you will hear His voice. Hebrews 3:7. Proverbs 1:24-32.**

**Felix communed with Paul often. His motive? He hoped for money!**

**Eternity reveals that Felix will stand before another Throne of Judgment and will be judged, instead of**

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<sup>1</sup>Craig S. Keener, *Acts: New Cambridge Bible Commentary*, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2020), 567..

<sup>2</sup>Grant R. Osborne, *Acts: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 426.

<sup>3</sup>Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 262.

<sup>4</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 391.

<sup>5</sup> *Fire Bible: English Standard Version*, Donald C. Stamps, Gen. Ed. (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers Int’l, 2011), 1867.

having Paul before his Throne and judging him!”<sup>6</sup>

d. Verse 27 – “But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound.” – So Felix made Paul remain in custody for two years! Stanley Toussaint states:

“To placate the Jews, Felix left Paul in prison even though he knew Paul was innocent. Felix eventually lost his position because he was cruelly intemperate in putting down a Jewish and Gentile conflict in Caesarea.”<sup>7</sup>

e. In closing this chapter, Warren Wiersbe shares the following insights:

“We cannot help but admire Paul as he faced false charges from wicked men. What an example he is for us today. Paul faced facts honestly and demanded that the truth be presented. His concern was for the souls of men, not for the safety of his own life. God had promised that Paul would witness before Gentiles and kings (9:15), and this experience was a fulfillment of that promise. Many sinners today are like Tertullus, who flatter and refuse to face the truth. Others are like Felix, who hear the truth and understand it, and are even convicted, but who refuse to obey. Still others are like Drusilla; she heard the Word and saw her husband deeply moved, yet the record says nothing about her own decision. Undoubtedly her youthful sins had already hardened her heart. Historians tell us that she died twenty-one years later in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius.”<sup>8</sup>

## II. Exposition of Chapter Twenty Five.

### A. Verses 1-12 – Paul appeals to Caesar.

1. Verse 1 – Who is Porcius Festus? Not a lot is known about Festus. Robert Utley asserts:

“This was Felix’s successor. He was a nobler personality, but obviously under the same political pressure and mind set. He was in office for two years and died in A.D. 62 while still in office.”<sup>9</sup>

2. Verses 2-3 – “...the high priest and the chief men...lay in ambush along the road to kill him.” – Even after Paul had spent two years in custody these religious leaders were still determined to see him killed. This shows how much Paul’s ministry was a threat to Satan’s kingdom. This hatred and desire to murder Paul was most definitely inspired by the devil. (cf. John 8:44).

3. Verses 4-12 – Festus is much wiser than Felix in the handling of this situation. In an attempt to appease the Jews, he asks Paul if he’d be willing to go to Jerusalem to go on trial. Paul wisely rejects this and stands on his Roman citizenship by appealing to Caesar.

### B. Verses 13- 27 – King Agrippa gets Involved.

1. Verse 13 – “...King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus.” – Dr. Thomas Constable gives us a good, concise biography of this king:

“This ‘King Agrippa’ was Marcus Julius Agrippa II, the son of Herod Agrippa I (12:1-11), the grandson of Aristobulus, and the great grandson of Herod the Great (Matt. 2:1). Herod the Great had tried to destroy the infant Jesus. One of his sons, Antipas, Agrippa II’s great uncle, beheaded John the Baptist and tried our Lord. Agrippa II’s father, Agrippa I, had executed James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John. He had also imprisoned Peter and died in Caesarea (ch. 12). His son, Agrippa II, is the man Paul now faced. Agrippa II had grown up in Rome, and was a favorite of Emperor Claudius. He was the last in the Herodian dynasty, and has been considered the best of the Herods.”<sup>10</sup>

2. Who is “Bernice” – Pastor Bob Yandian gives us insight:

“His sister Bernice is said to be the most beautiful woman of the ancient world. She is the sister of Drusilla. These two sisters continually fight to outdo each other. Bernice has left her husband and is living in incest with her brother Agrippa II. Later she will become the mistress of Vespasian who is ruling Jerusalem. She then becomes the mistress of the son of Vespasian, Titus.”

3. Verses 14-21 – Festus informs Agrippa of Paul and the situation surrounding him.

4. Verses 22-27 – The next day Agrippa and Bernice come into the auditorium and Paul is brought in.

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<sup>6</sup> Kevin J. Conner, *The Book of Acts* (Portland, OR: Bible Press, 1973), 124.

<sup>7</sup> Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 422.

<sup>8</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1992), 347.

<sup>9</sup> Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, 265.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Acts* (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2019), 457-458.