

LESSON NINE

PAUL DEFENDS HIMSELF AT CAESAREA

TEXT: Acts 24, 25 & 26.

A. **STANDING BEFORE KINGS:**

The Lord had told Ananias that Paul was a chosen vessel to bear the name of Jesus before the Gentiles, the kings, and the children of Israel. In this lesson we study about Paul bearing the name of Jesus before two governors and one king. Later he stands before the emperor at Rome.

1. **FELIX:**

Felix was liberated from slavery by Claudius by whom he was appointed procurator of Judea. He ruled the province in a mean, cruel and profligate manner. His period of office was full of troubles and sedition. The wife of Felix was Drusilla, daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

2. **FESTUS:**

He was the successor of Felix as governor of Judea. Nero appointed him probably in the autumn of the year 60 A.D. He died probably in the summer of 62 A.D. having ruled the province less than two years.

3. **KING AGRIPPA:**

Herod Agrippa II was the son of Herod Agrippa I. He was in Rome at the time of the death of his father A.D. 44. The relation in which he stood to his sister, Bernice, was the cause of much suspicion. The appearance of Paul before Agrippa tells much about his character. The pomp with which the king came into the audience chamber and the cold irony with which he met the impassioned words of the Apostle are both characteristic traits of this man.

B. **PAUL DEFENDS HIMSELF BEFORE FELIX:**

1. **PAUL SENT TO FELIX:**

At Jerusalem a plot was discovered that forty men had conspired to kill Paul. The captain, Claudius Lysias, wrote Governor Felix at Caesarea a letter and sent Paul to him guarded by two centurions, two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen. Paul was allowed to ride all the way.

Felix sent to Jerusalem for the accusers of Paul and after five days they arrived in Caesarea.

2. **THE ACCUSATION AGAINST PAUL:**

Ananias took the elders and a certain orator named Tertullus with him to Caesarea. Tertullus was to be the spokesman. The name "Tertullus" meant "triple-hardened" and certainly could typify the condition of Israel. After paying due courtesy and flattery about the nobility of the ignoble Felix, Tertullus presented the accusation against Paul. It must be remembered that the Jews hated Felix like poison.

The charges were:

- (a) Paul was a pestilent fellow.
- (b) He was a mover of sedition among the Jews throughout the world.
- (c) He profaned the temple.

All Paul's accusers affirmed the things Tertullus said about Paul.

3. PAUL'S PERSONAL DEFENSE:

Paul stated that his accusers could not prove the things they had said, although he did confess that he worshipped God after the way that they thought was heresy. He stated:

- (a) He believed all things, which are written in the law and the prophets.
- (b) He had hope in God concerning the resurrection of the just and the unjust.
- (c) He kept a clear conscience toward God and man.
- (d) He brought alms to his nation.
- (e) He only entered the Temple to worship.
- (f) He caused no tumult.
- (g) He was confident that any or all of his accusers could find no evil in him.

4. PAUL LEFT BOUND:

Felix dismissed the case promising to hear the matter again after Lysias should come down. He puts off judgment until later, just as he does about his soul's salvation. He hoped that he might receive money as a bribe to set Paul free.

Paul was placed in the keeping of a centurion and was given liberty. His acquaintances were allowed to visit and minister to him. He was left a prisoner for two full years.

During this period of time Felix heard Paul often. On one occasion he sent for Paul when his wife Drusilla, a Jewess, was present. Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come. Felix was known for his unrighteous rule and his utter lack of temperance in his personal life. The governor was violently shaken but he only procrastinated. The term of Felix expired with him still making no decision concerning his soul's salvation nor with Paul.

C. PAUL DEFENDS HIMSELF BEFORE FESTUS:

When the new Governor, Festus, went to Jerusalem, the Jews assailed him with requests to bring Paul back to Jerusalem. They intended to kill him and he was being transferred. Festus refused, but told them that they could come down to Caesarea and lay charges against Paul. They did so, and although they laid many complaints against Paul, they could prove none of them.

Festus asked Paul, "*Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?*" Paul knew the regulations of the law, and he knew that he had fulfilled his ministry at

Jerusalem. Therefore he answered boldly, *"I appeal to Caesar."* Festus conferred with his council and then announced that he would be sent to Caesar as he requested.

D. PAUL DEFENDS HIMSELF BEFORE AGRIPPA:

When King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea, Festus told Agrippa about Paul. Festus confessed surprise at the type of accusation brought before against Paul

King Agrippa desired to hear Paul himself. Consequently the court was set. Festus introduced all present with the purpose of the gathering. He set Paul forth in their midst and proceeded to tell them that he had found no guilt in him, and that he did not see any reasonableness in sending a prisoner to Rome who was evidently an innocent man. He asked them to listen to Paul and assist him in framing a charge to send to Caesar Augustus.

Paul was happy to speak to the rulers and the king because he had a message for them. He addressed his remarks to King Agrippa whom he acknowledged as being expert in all customs and questions among the Jews. He proceeded to tell the king why he was held a prisoner. Paul told the real reason the Jews had become so embittered against him because of his stand regarding the resurrection. Paul did not hesitate to testify before these skeptical persons regarding his personal conversion and the miraculous element that is involved in Holy Ghost salvation.

Festus interrupted with an outburst that revealed the power of Paul's preaching. He moved both demons and men. Festus cried, *"Paul, you are man."* Agrippa confessed that he was profoundly moved. Through the centuries his words, *"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"* have been quoted by soul winners. Those who listened were convinced of Paul's innocence and they tried to ease their consciences by shifting the responsibility. Agrippa said to Festus, *"This man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Caesar."*

LESSON NINE

SELF HELP TEST

A. *State whether the following is TRUE or FALSE:*

1. _____ Cladius Lysias wrote Felix a letter.
2. _____ Tertullus laid charges against Paul before Felix.
3. _____ Bernice was the wife of Governor Felix.
4. _____ Felix was a procrastinator.
5. _____ Festus offered to return Paul to Jerusalem for trial.
6. _____ Paul appealed to Caesar.
7. _____ A plot to kill Paul was discovered by Paul's nephew.
8. _____ John Mark was Paul's nephew.
9. _____ Felix said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."
10. _____ Both Festus and Agrippa were convinced of Paul's innocence.

B. *Describe the character of these three men:*

1. Felix:
2. Festus:
3. Agrippa: