

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

**HIDE IT IN OUR HEARTS:** Linger in the Text and Let it Dwell Richly

“But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

—1 Peter 3:15



Sunday, June 05, 2022



## To Caesar You Shall Go

*Paul's Final Appeal & Appearance in Caesarea*

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**HEAR IT:** Listen to the Text and Discover the Truth

**Introduction:**

Paul's final **defense** or **apology** takes place in Acts 25–26. Having already given his defense before the **the Jewish Crowd** (22:1–21), **the Jewish Council** (23:1–10), and **the Roman Governor, Felix** (24:1–21), Paul now stands before the new **Roman Governor, Festus** (25:1–12), and the regional **King Herod Agrippa II** (25:23–26:32).

And once again Paul gives a clear and compelling defense of his faith and summary of the gospel.

**READ OR REVIEW THE PASSAGE: ACTS 24:27-26:32.**

As the passage is rather lengthy, you may want to forgo reading it, and simply walk through it as you address the discussion questions.

**HASH IT OUT:** Look into the Text and Develop the Truth

**REVIEW THE LARGER STORYLINE:**

- God will accomplish His **purpose** [for Paul] and no one can stop it. The **Jewish crowd** can't stop it. The **Jewish Council** can't stop. The **Jewish Conspirators** can't stop it. Nor can the **Gentile Courts**.

### 1A. PAUL'S TRIAL IS FINALLY ACCELERATED. (24:27-36:32)

As Acts 24:27 indicates, **two years** separate the first three trials from this later trial before Festus and subsequent appearance before Agrippa and other prominent men of Caesarea.

*"But **after two years had passed**, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and wishing to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul imprisoned."*

—Acts 24:27

1. The Lord had told Paul that he would bear witness in Rome. Yet he found himself in prison for two years in Caesarea. While there is no indication in the passage that Paul questioned God during those two years, how would you have handled it? Do you find it difficult to wait on God? What may God be teaching us in such circumstances?
2. The change in governorship from Felix to Festus was significant for Paul. What insight might this give us concerning the impact of change in governmental or secular leadership in our day for the advancement of or threat to the gospel? How does this impact world missions?

### 2A. PAUL'S TRUTHFULNESS IS FULLY VINDICATED. (25:1-27)

1. Paul's public life and conduct was vindicated with every trial. All accusations against him were either **false** or **fabricated**. How important is living a blameless life? Read/review the additional verses we looked at this morning. How do you see these lived out in Paul's life and defense in this passage? How do they apply to us today?

*"Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. <sup>12</sup> **Keep your behavior excellent** among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation."*

—1 Peter 2:11ff.

*"Do all things without grumbling or disputing; <sup>15</sup> **so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach** in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, <sup>16</sup> holding fast the word of life,..."*

—Philippians 2:14-16

*"**Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders**, making the most of the opportunity. <sup>15</sup> Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."*

—Colossians 4:14-15

### 3A. PAUL'S TESTIMONY IS FAITHFULLY PROCLAIMED. (26:1-32)

1. Paul was not only **blameless in his walk**, but he was also **bold in his witness**. Read through Paul's witness again in Acts 26, **especially verses 18-24**, and **identify the key elements** in Paul's testimony and gospel summary.
2. Both **Festus** and **Agrippa** engage with Paul at the end of his defense. (verses 25-29). How do they respond? How does Paul engage and challenge them? What can we learn from this as to how people may respond to our witness?
3. Paul was not intimidated by his audience. Where did his boldness come from? How can we exhibit greater boldness in witnessing?