

Acts 25 – Paul Appeals to Caesar

Brief recap. Paul concludes missionary trip #3 by visiting Jerusalem. He's there just a matter of days when a riot breaks out against him. Paul is rescued by Roman soldiers which led to a series of trials. It sure looks like Paul is innocent of all charges, but he's kept in custody anyway.

Paul is facing three charges...
Violated Jewish law
Defiled the temple
Somehow acted against Caesar

Governor Felix could have and should have released Paul, but he didn't. Here's the conflict:

Felix cannot condemn Paul without offending the Roman system of justice.
Felix cannot release Paul without offending the Jews.

The big-ticket item in this passage is Paul's appeal to Caesar. As a Roman citizen, he had the right to ask the Supreme Court – Caesar – to hear his case.

Reasons to make the appeal include:

1. Paul moves the jurisdiction from a religious matter to a civil matter.
One reason why Paul appealed to Caesar was to get a fair trial. He's being accused of things he didn't do. The Jews have proved themselves to be unreasonable. Appeal to Caesar and let this be a civil issue.

After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!" Acts 25:12 (NIV)

But there's even greater motivation in the mind of Paul.

2. Jesus told Paul that he will testify of Him in Rome. Paul knows that Rome is in his future.

The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome." Acts 23:11 (NIV)

This is a unique task that Paul had been given by the Risen Lord Jesus. Paul was called to go to Rome in the Ancient World as a Christian witness. No other apostle received that call. We know Luke was with Paul in Rome, but Luke was there primarily to support Paul.

Even though you are not like Paul, you can be encouraged as you read of Paul's adventures in Acts because these stories show you what God CAN do and what CAN happen when Christians abandon themselves to the will of God.

When Paul is in this difficult situation, he has some things he needs to do.

Not worry is one of those things.

Trusting God is one of those things.

Taking care of himself physically, emotionally, spiritually are some of those things.

The Christian life is not about sin management. It's about following Jesus and trusting Him. Paul's job is to trust God. That might mean prayer, reviewing Scripture, connecting with Christians, singing hymns, writing letters. Paul needs to feed his faith.

Please notice as we go through this that Paul was not defeated or discouraged.

Luke wants you walking away from the book of Acts thinking ...

Nothing can defeat the Church.

Nothing can defeat the gospel.

Nothing can defeat me.

Because Jesus has already won AND Jesus is building His Church, nothing can defeat the Church, nothing can stop the gospel. Nothing can defeat you since you belong to Jesus.

This is yet another aspect to the hope that belongs to the Christian. God cannot be defeated.

I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. Isaiah 46:10 (NIV)