

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Acts Chapter 25 — Paul Appeals to Caesar

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Acts Chapter 25 continues Paul's long legal struggle.

Felix is gone.

Porcius Festus is now governor.

But Paul is still:

A prisoner.

The accusations remain.

The hostility remains.

The assassination plans remain.

Yet something else also remains:

The promise of Jesus.

The Lord had already told Paul:

“You must also testify in Rome.”

Acts 25 shows another major step toward the fulfillment of that promise.

The Jewish leaders once again attempt to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem.

Their request sounds procedural.

But secretly:

They are planning another ambush.

Their intention is:

To kill Paul along the way.

Festus refuses their immediate request and requires the accusations to be presented in Caesarea.

When Paul stands before the court:

The charges are serious.

But once again:

They cannot be proved.

Paul states plainly:

“I have not done anything wrong against the law of the Jews, the temple, or Caesar.”

Then Festus asks whether Paul is willing to return to Jerusalem for trial.

Paul understands the danger.

He knows he belongs before a Roman court.

So he exercises his right as a Roman citizen and declares:

“I appeal to Caesar!”

Festus answers:

“You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!”

Humanly speaking:

Paul made a legal appeal.

Spiritually:

That appeal becomes another part of God’s providential route toward Rome.

Soon:

King Agrippa and Bernice arrive.

Festus explains Paul’s case.

His description is remarkable.

He expected serious criminal charges.

Instead:

The controversy concerned religion and:

“A man named Jesus, who had died, but Paul claimed was alive.”

That statement reaches the heart of Christianity.

The real issue is:

Is Jesus alive?

Paul’s entire ministry rests upon the answer:

Yes.

If Jesus is dead:

The gospel collapses.

If Jesus is risen:

Everything changes.

Then Agrippa says:

“I would like to hear this man myself.”

The next day:

Agrippa.

Bernice.

Military officers.

Prominent citizens.

Festus.

All gather with:

Great pomp and ceremony.

Then:

Paul the prisoner enters.

Humanly:

The powerful people are seated.

Paul is in chains.

But spiritually:

Paul possesses the message everyone in the room needs.

Once again:

God turns a courtroom into a pulpit.

The central truth of Acts 25 is:

God sovereignly uses courts, rulers, legal rights, delays, and even hostile accusations to protect Paul, advance the gospel, and move His servant toward Rome, while the resurrection of Jesus remains the central issue that earthly authorities cannot ignore.

I. FESTUS ARRIVES IN THE PROVINCE

Acts 25:1

“Three days after Festus arrived in the province, he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem.”

Festus wastes little time beginning his responsibilities.

Cross References

Acts 24:27

Felix had been replaced by Porcius Festus after leaving Paul imprisoned for two years.

Acts 23:23

Paul had originally been transferred from Jerusalem to Caesarea under heavy military protection.

Luke 3:1

Luke regularly places gospel events within the framework of actual rulers and governmental history.

Spiritual Principle

Political leaders change, but God’s purpose continues.

Felix leaves.

Festus arrives.

Paul remains in God’s hands.

II. THE JEWISH LEADERS RENEW THEIR CHARGES

Acts 25:2

“There the high priest and Jewish leaders presented their charges against Paul.”

Two years have passed.

But the hostility has not disappeared.

Cross References

Acts 24:1

The high priest and elders had previously presented accusations against Paul before Felix.

Acts 21:28

Paul had originally been falsely accused of teaching against the Jewish people, law, and temple.

Matthew 26:59

Religious leaders had once similarly sought accusations against Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Time does not always weaken hostility when hearts remain unchanged.

III. ANOTHER MURDER PLOT

Acts 25:3

“They urgently asked Festus to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, planning an ambush to kill him along the way.”

Their stated request and actual motive are completely different.

Publicly:

Bring Paul to Jerusalem.

Privately:

Kill him.

Cross References

Acts 23:12

More than forty men had previously taken an oath to kill Paul.

Acts 9:23

Enemies had plotted Paul’s death even early in his Christian ministry.

Psalms 37:32

The wicked watch for opportunities to destroy the righteous.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“A Respectable Request Can Hide a Wicked Motive.”

Always distinguish:

What people say.

From:

What they actually intend.

IV. FESTUS REFUSES THE TRANSFER

Acts 25:4

“But Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would return there soon.”

The assassination plan fails immediately.

Festus may not know the secret motive.

But his decision protects Paul.

Cross References

Acts 23:35

Paul had already been placed under Roman guard in Caesarea.

Acts 24:27

He remained imprisoned there when Festus took office.

John 18:38

Roman officials repeatedly found themselves dealing with religious accusations they did not fully understand.

Spiritual Principle

God can block a danger through the ordinary decision of someone who does not even know the danger exists.

V. “LET THEM COME AND PRESS CHARGES”

Acts 25:5

“He said, ‘Let your leaders come with me and press charges if the man has done anything wrong.’”

Festus requires:

Formal accusation.

Public hearing.

Legal process.

Cross References

Acts 25:16

Festus later explains that Roman procedure required an accused person to face accusers and answer charges.

Acts 23:30

Paul’s accusers had already been told to present their case formally.

Deuteronomy 19:15

Biblical justice required adequate testimony before guilt could be established.

Spiritual Principle

Justice requires evidence, not secret plots.

VI. PAUL IS BROUGHT BEFORE FESTUS

Acts 25:6

“After staying in Jerusalem for more than ten days, Festus went down to Caesarea. The next day, he convened the court and ordered Paul to be brought in.”

Paul is once again before a judge.

Cross References

Acts 24:1

Paul had previously appeared in Caesarea before Felix.

Acts 23:35

He had remained there awaiting formal proceedings.

Matthew 27:11

Jesus Himself had stood before a Roman governor while false accusations surrounded Him.

Spiritual Principle

Repeated trials do not mean God has forgotten His servant.

VII. SERIOUS ACCUSATIONS WITHOUT PROOF

Acts 25:7

“When Paul appeared, the Jews from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious accusations that they could not prove.”

The accusations are:

Many.

Serious.

Unproven.

Cross References

Acts 24:13

Paul had already said his accusers could not prove their charges.

Acts 6:13

Stephen also faced distorted religious accusations.

Matthew 26:60

False witnesses against Jesus likewise failed to establish a consistent case.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“The Seriousness of an Accusation Does Not Determine Its Truthfulness.”

Evidence matters.

VIII. PAUL DENIES WRONGDOING

Acts 25:8

“Paul defended himself: ‘I have not done anything wrong against the law of the Jews, the temple, or Caesar.’”

Paul answers three categories.

Jewish Law

The Temple

Caesar

He denies criminal wrongdoing in each.

Cross References

Acts 24:12

Paul had previously denied stirring crowds or creating disorder in Jerusalem.

Acts 21:28

His opponents had falsely accused him of defiling the temple.

Acts 23:1

Paul had maintained that he lived with a clear conscience before God.

Spiritual Principle

A Christian should be able to distinguish persecution for faith from punishment for actual wrongdoing.

IX. FESTUS WANTS TO PLEASE THE JEWS

Acts 25:9

“Festus, wanting to please the Jews, asked Paul, ‘Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there?’”

Here political pressure enters justice.

Festus wants:

Favor.

Cross References

Acts 24:27

Felix had also left Paul imprisoned because he wanted to please the Jews.

Mark 15:15

Pilate released Barabbas because he wanted to satisfy the crowd.

John 19:12

Political pressure was used against Pilate during Jesus’ trial.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Justice becomes dangerous when pleasing people becomes more important than doing what is right.

X. PAUL INSISTS ON THE PROPER COURT

Acts 25:10

“Paul answered, ‘I am now standing before Caesar’s court, where I should be tried. I have not wronged the Jews, as you know very well.’”

Paul does not agree to an unsafe transfer.

Cross References

Acts 18:14

Gallio had previously recognized that Paul was not guilty of ordinary criminal wrongdoing.

Acts 23:29

Claudius Lysias had found no charge against Paul deserving death or imprisonment.

Romans 13:1

Paul recognized civil authority as legitimate under God.

Spiritual Principle

Respecting government does not require surrendering proper legal process.

XI. “I APPEAL TO CAESAR!”

Acts 25:11

“If I am guilty and have done anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if their charges are false, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!”

Paul’s reasoning is remarkable.

He is not afraid of justice.

He says:

If I deserve death:

I accept justice.

But:

If the charges are false:

I will not willingly submit to injustice.

Cross References

Acts 26:32

Agrippa later explains that Paul could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar.

Acts 22:25

Paul had previously invoked legal protection against unlawful flogging.

Acts 16:37

In Philippi, Paul had also insisted that Roman law be properly respected.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Christian Courage Does Not Mean Refusing Every Legal Protection.”

XII. “TO CAESAR YOU WILL GO”

Acts 25:12

“After conferring with his council, Festus declared, ‘You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!’”

This is more than legal procedure.

Remember Jesus’ earlier words:

“You must also testify in Rome.”

Now Rome becomes legally inevitable.

Cross References

Acts 25:21

Festus later explains that Paul is being held for the emperor’s decision.

Acts 27:24

God will again assure Paul that he must stand before Caesar.

Philippians 1:13

Paul’s imprisonment later becomes known even among the imperial guard.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“God Can Use a Legal Appeal to Fulfill a Divine Appointment.”

XIII. AGRIPPA AND BERNICE ARRIVE

Acts 25:13

“A few days later, King Agrippa and his sister Bernice came to Caesarea to pay respects to Festus.”

New rulers enter Paul's story.

Cross References

Acts 12:1

The Herodian family had already played a significant role in opposition to the early church.

Acts 26:30

Agrippa and Bernice later hear Paul's testimony directly.

Luke 23:8

Herod Antipas had once eagerly desired to see Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

God can place His servant before powerful people who would otherwise never hear him.

XIV. FESTUS EXPLAINS PAUL'S CASE

Acts 25:14

“While they were there, Festus explained Paul's case to the king: ‘There is a man left as a prisoner by Felix.’”

Paul's case becomes a subject of political discussion.

Cross References

Acts 24:27

Felix had left Paul imprisoned when Festus replaced him.

Acts 23:33

Paul had originally been delivered to the governor in Caesarea.

Luke 23:6

Roman officials sometimes referred difficult cases to rulers thought better qualified to understand them.

Spiritual Principle

Even when Paul is not present, his case—and therefore the issue of Christ—keeps reaching new people.

XV. THE LEADERS WANTED PAUL CONDEMNED

Acts 25:15

“When I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews brought charges against him, asking for his condemnation.”

Their desired outcome precedes proof.

Cross References

Acts 24:1

The same leadership had previously prosecuted Paul before Felix.

Matthew 27:1

Religious leaders had similarly planned how to have Jesus executed.

Luke 23:1

Jesus was also brought before Roman authority through organized accusation.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Justice is corrupted when the desired verdict is chosen before the evidence is heard.

XVI. FESTUS EXPLAINS ROMAN PROCEDURE

Acts 25:16

“I told them that it is not the Roman way to hand over anyone before they have faced their accusers and had a chance to defend themselves.”

This is a strong statement of legal fairness.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 19:18

Judges were instructed to investigate charges carefully.

John 7:51

Nicodemus asked whether the law judged anyone before first hearing and investigating the matter.

Proverbs 18:13

Answering before hearing the matter is foolish and shameful.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Hear the Evidence Before Reaching the Verdict.”

XVII. FESTUS HOLDS COURT QUICKLY

Acts 25:17

“So when they came here, I wasted no time. The next day I held court and ordered the man brought in.”

Festus emphasizes procedural action.

Cross References

Acts 25:6

He convened court shortly after returning to Caesarea.

Acts 24:1

Paul had already endured a previous formal hearing under Felix.

John 18:33

Roman judicial procedure also surrounded Jesus’ appearance before Pilate.

Spiritual Principle

Speed in justice can be useful only when paired with fairness and truth.

XVIII. THE EXPECTED CRIMES ARE MISSING

Acts 25:18

“But when his accusers stood up, they did not charge him with the crimes I expected.”

Festus expected:

Serious criminal behavior.

But he encountered:

A religious controversy.

Cross References

Acts 25:7

The charges were serious but unprovable.

Acts 23:29

Lysias had already concluded that the controversy concerned Jewish law.

Acts 24:5

Paul's enemies had attempted to portray him as politically dangerous.

Spiritual Principle

The rhetoric surrounding an accusation can sound more dangerous than the actual evidence.

XIX. THE ISSUE IS JESUS—DEAD OR ALIVE?

Acts 25:19

“Instead, they had disputes about their own religion and about a man named Jesus, who had died, but Paul claimed was alive.”

Festus unintentionally summarizes the central issue of Christianity.

Jesus Died

Historically real death.

Paul Claimed He Is Alive

Resurrection.

Cross References

Acts 23:6

Paul had repeatedly insisted that resurrection was at the heart of his case.

Acts 17:32

The resurrection had already divided Paul's audience in Athens.

1 Corinthians 15:14

Paul taught that if Christ has not been raised, Christian preaching and faith are empty.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Christianity Ultimately Stands or Falls on the Question: Is Jesus Alive?”

XX. FESTUS DOES NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO

Acts 25:20

“I was at a loss about how to handle such matters, so I asked if Paul would be willing to go to Jerusalem to be tried there.”

Festus does not understand the theological issue.

Cross References

Acts 25:9

Festus had asked Paul whether he would return to Jerusalem.

John 18:38

Pilate likewise struggled with a case involving truth claims he did not fully understand.

Luke 23:7

Roman officials sometimes transferred difficult matters between jurisdictions.

Spiritual Principle

Human authority can possess political power while lacking spiritual understanding.

XXI. PAUL REQUESTS THE EMPEROR'S DECISION

Acts 25:21

“But Paul appealed to be held for the Emperor’s decision, so I ordered him to be kept until I could send him to Caesar.”

The legal path is now fixed.

Cross References

Acts 25:11

Paul had clearly appealed to Caesar.

Acts 25:12

Festus formally accepted the appeal.

Acts 28:19

Paul later explains that his appeal to Caesar was forced by circumstances, not hostility toward his own people.

Spiritual Principle

God can use a decision made in one courtroom to open the door to another continent and another audience.

XXII. AGRIPPA WANTS TO HEAR PAUL

Acts 25:22

“Agrippa said to Festus, ‘I would like to hear this man myself.’ ‘Tomorrow you will hear him,’ Festus replied.”

Another door opens.

Paul did not request this audience.

Agrippa does.

Cross References

Luke 23:8

Herod once eagerly wanted to see Jesus because he had heard much about Him.

Acts 9:15

God had told Ananias that Paul would carry Christ's name before kings.

Matthew 10:18

Jesus warned that His followers would be brought before governors and kings as witnesses.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“The Trial You Did Not Want May Put You Before the Audience You Could Never Reach.”

XXIII. AGRIPPA ENTERS WITH GREAT POMP

Acts 25:23

“The next day, Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and ceremony. They entered the audience hall with the high-ranking officers and prominent men of the city. At Festus' command, Paul was brought in.”

The contrast is striking.

Agrippa:

Royal ceremony.

Bernice:

Prominence.

Military officers:

Authority.

City leaders:

Prestige.

Paul:

A prisoner.

Cross References

Acts 25:13

Agrippa and Bernice had come to visit Festus.

Acts 12:21

Herod had previously appeared publicly in royal clothing and ceremony.

Esther 1:4

Earthly rulers often displayed wealth and royal glory publicly.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Heaven does not measure greatness by who enters the room with the most ceremony.

XXIV. THE CROWD DEMANDS PAUL'S DEATH

Acts 25:24

“Festus said, ‘King Agrippa, and all who are here with us, you see this man. The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he must not live any longer.’”

The demand is severe.

Cross References

Acts 22:22

The Jerusalem crowd had shouted that Paul was not fit to live.

Luke 23:18

A crowd had similarly cried out against Jesus.

John 19:15

Jesus also faced a public demand for death.

Spiritual Principle

Public pressure does not determine guilt.

XXV. FESTUS FINDS NOTHING DESERVING DEATH

Acts 25:25

“But I found he had done nothing deserving death. Since he has appealed to the Emperor, I have decided to send him.”

Again:

Official examination finds no capital offense.

Cross References

Acts 23:29

Claudius Lysias had already concluded that Paul deserved neither death nor imprisonment.

Acts 26:31

Agrippa and others will later reach the same conclusion.

Luke 23:4

Pilate likewise repeatedly found no criminal basis for condemning Jesus.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Repetition of innocence by multiple authorities exposes the weakness of the accusations.

XXVI. FESTUS HAS NOTHING DEFINITE TO WRITE

Acts 25:26

“But I have nothing definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore, I have brought him before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after this hearing I may have something to write.”

Festus has a procedural problem.

Paul is going to Caesar.

But:

What exactly is the criminal charge?

Cross References

Acts 9:15

God had already appointed Paul to testify before kings.

Acts 26:32

Agrippa will ultimately recognize Paul's innocence.

1 Peter 3:15

Believers are called to be prepared to give a reasoned answer concerning their hope.

Spiritual Principle

God can use an official's uncertainty to create another opportunity for gospel witness.

XXVII. SENDING A PRISONER WITHOUT CHARGES IS UNREASONABLE

Acts 25:27

“For it seems unreasonable to send a prisoner to Rome without specifying the charges against him.”

Festus recognizes the obvious legal problem.

Cross References

Proverbs 18:13

Giving judgment before hearing the matter is foolish.

Deuteronomy 19:15

Serious accusations require proper evidence.

John 18:29

Pilate himself asked Jesus' accusers what formal charge they were bringing.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Justice Requires a Charge That Can Be Stated and Evidence That Can Be Examined.”

XXVIII. PAUL'S APPEAL AND GOD'S PROVIDENCE

Paul says:

“I appeal to Caesar.”

Festus says:

“To Caesar you will go.”

Jesus had already said:

“You must also testify in Rome.”

Spiritual Principle

Human decisions can become the means through which divine purposes are fulfilled.

XXIX. PAUL DID NOT FEAR A JUST VERDICT

Paul says:

If I deserve death:

I do not refuse it.

This is not recklessness.

It is confidence in justice.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A clear conscience does not fear honest examination.

XXX. PAUL REFUSES AN UNJUST TRANSFER

He will not voluntarily return to Jerusalem.

Why?

There have already been:

Murder plots.

Ambush plans.

False accusations.

Spiritual Principle

Faith does not require placing yourself unnecessarily into the hands of people openly committed to destroying you.

XXXI. APPEALING TO CAESAR WAS NOT LACK OF FAITH

Paul had Christ's promise.

Still:

He appealed legally.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Trusting God and Using Lawful Means Belong Together.”

God's sovereignty does not make wisdom unnecessary.

XXXII. GOD USES ROMAN LAW

Roman citizenship had already protected Paul from:

Illegal flogging.

Improper transfer.

Mob violence.

Now:

It provides appeal to Caesar.

Spiritual Principle

God may use earthly rights as temporary instruments for eternal purposes.

XXXIII. PEOPLE-PLEASING THREATENS JUSTICE

Felix wanted to please the Jews.

Now Festus feels the same pressure.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Leaders lose moral clarity when popularity becomes more important than truth.

XXXIV. THE SAME MURDEROUS SPIRIT RETURNS

Acts 23:

More than forty men planned an ambush.

Acts 25:

Another ambush is planned.

Spiritual Principle

Unrepented hatred tends to repeat itself.

XXXV. GOD BLOCKS ANOTHER AMBUSH

Paul never walks into the trap.

Why?

Festus refuses the transfer.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Some dangers God delivers us from are dangers we never even see.

XXXVI. CHRISTIANITY IS NOT PRESENTED AS CRIMINAL

Again:

Roman officials struggle to identify any genuine crime.

Spiritual Principle

The controversy surrounding Paul centers ultimately on theology, especially Jesus and resurrection, not ordinary criminal wrongdoing.

XXXVII. FESTUS ACCIDENTALLY SUMMARIZES THE GOSPEL ISSUE

He says:

Jesus died.

Paul says:

He is alive.

That is the dividing line.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Everything Changes If Jesus Christ Is Truly Alive.”

If He is alive:

His claims matter.

His cross matters.

His kingdom matters.

His judgment matters.

His salvation matters.

XXXVIII. THE RESURRECTION CANNOT REMAIN A SIDE ISSUE

Festus may see resurrection as:

A strange religious dispute.

Paul sees it as:

The foundation of Christian hope.

Spiritual Principle

The resurrection is not an optional doctrine attached to Christianity; it is central to Christianity itself.

XXXIX. CHRIST'S PROMISE TO PAUL CONTINUES UNFOLDING

Acts 9 said Paul would testify before:

Kings.

Acts 23 said:

Rome.

Acts 25 brings:

Agrippa.

And:

Caesar's court.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God often fulfills large promises through a sequence of smaller providential steps.

XL. AGRIPPA'S CURIOSITY OPENS A DOOR

Agrippa says:

"I would like to hear this man myself."

Paul now gains a royal audience.

Spiritual Principle

Curiosity may not equal faith, but it can still become an opportunity for gospel proclamation.

XLI. POMP VERSUS TRUTH

The room is filled with:

Status.

Uniforms.

Royal display.

Social importance.

But the central spiritual issue is carried by:

The prisoner.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“The Most Important Person in the Room May Be the One Carrying the Truth, Not the One Wearing the Crown.”

XLII. PAUL’S CHAINS HAVE BECOME ACCESS

Without imprisonment:

Would Paul have stood before:

Felix?

Festus?

Agrippa?

Eventually Caesar?

Spiritual Principle

What restricts one kind of freedom may open another kind of opportunity.

XLIII. PAUL'S CASE KEEPS EXPANDING HIS AUDIENCE

First:

The crowd.

Then:

The Sanhedrin.

Then:

Felix.

Then:

Festus.

Now:

Agrippa.

Soon:

Rome.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The gospel can travel farther through opposition than its enemies ever intended.

XLIV. ACCUSATION KEEPS CREATING PULPITS

Paul's enemies want:

Condemnation.

God keeps producing:

Audiences.

Spiritual Principle

God can turn the very process designed to silence a witness into the means of multiplying the witness.

XLV. THE COURTROOM AND THE GOSPEL

Acts 25 shows believers may engage:

Law.

Government.

Procedure.

Appeals.

Evidence.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Christian faith does not require withdrawal from legitimate legal processes.

XLVI. GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER GOVERNMENTS

Festus does not intend to fulfill Jesus' prophecy.

Agrippa does not intend to advance Paul's mission.

Yet:

Both become part of it.

Spiritual Principle

God can accomplish His purposes through rulers who do not know they are participating in them.

XLVII. ROME IS NOW CLOSER THAN EVER

Paul has spent years waiting.

But suddenly:

The route is legally established.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A long delay can be followed by a decisive door opening very quickly.

XLVIII. THE PRISONER IS NOT DEFEATED

Paul remains:

Bound.

But he is not:

Silenced.

Spiritual Principle

A Christian's usefulness is not determined by whether circumstances are comfortable.

XLIX. THE WORLD'S POWER IS TEMPORARY

Agrippa has:

A title.

Paul has:

A testimony.

Festus has:

Authority.

Paul has:

The gospel.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Political power controls circumstances temporarily; gospel truth deals with eternity.

L. WHAT ACTS 25 TEACHES ABOUT JUSTICE

Justice requires:

Accusation.

Evidence.

Hearing.

Defense.

Impartiality.

Spiritual Principle

Neither religion nor politics should bypass truth and due process.

LI. WHAT ACTS 25 TEACHES ABOUT RIGHTS

Paul uses his legal rights.

But:

Rights are tools.

Not gods.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Use every lawful right wisely, but keep your ultimate trust in God rather than the system.

LII. WHAT ACTS 25 TEACHES ABOUT PROVIDENCE

God uses:

Festus' decision.

Paul's citizenship.

Roman law.

An appeal.

Agrippa's visit.

Agrippa's curiosity.

Spiritual Principle

Providence often appears ordinary until we see how perfectly the pieces fit together.

LIII. WHAT ACTS 25 TEACHES ABOUT THE RESURRECTION

Festus reduces the dispute to:

A dead man.

Paul says:

He is alive.

That is actually profound.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The gospel is not merely advice from a dead teacher; it is the announcement that the crucified Jesus is alive and reigning.

LIV. WHAT ACTS 25 TEACHES ABOUT WITNESS

Paul's imprisonment continually produces:

New audiences.

Spiritual Principle

Your circumstances may determine where you speak, but they do not have to determine whether you speak.

LV. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM ACTS 25

1. God Protects Through Providence

Principle:

The planned ambush fails because Festus refuses the transfer.

2. Charges Require Proof

Principle:

Serious accusations remain unproven despite repetition.

3. Christians May Use Lawful Rights

Principle:

Paul appeals to Caesar rather than surrender to injustice.

4. Human Courts Can Serve Divine Purposes

Principle:

Paul's appeal becomes the road toward Rome.

5. The Resurrection Remains Central

Principle:

The controversy ultimately concerns Jesus, who died but whom Paul proclaims as alive.

6. God Opens Doors Before Powerful People

Principle:

Agrippa wants to hear Paul personally.

7. The Gospel Cannot Be Silenced

Principle:

Every attempt to suppress Paul gives him another audience.

LVI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What did the Jewish leaders ask Festus to do?

They asked him to transfer Paul from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

Secretly, they planned to ambush and kill Paul on the journey.

Question 2

How was the assassination plot prevented?

Festus refused to transfer Paul and required his accusers to come to Caesarea.

Without realizing it, his decision protected Paul.

Question 3

What happened when Paul's accusers appeared?

They presented many serious accusations, but they could not prove them.

Question 4

What did Paul say about the charges?

Paul said he had committed no wrongdoing against:

The Jewish law.

The temple.

Or Caesar.

Question 5

Why did Festus ask Paul to return to Jerusalem?

Festus wanted to please the Jewish leaders and suggested holding the trial there.

Question 6

How did Paul respond?

He insisted that Caesar's court was the proper place for his case and formally appealed to Caesar.

Question 7

What did Festus say after Paul appealed?

He said:

“You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!”

Question 8

How does Paul's appeal relate to God's earlier promise?

Jesus had already told Paul that he must testify in Rome.

The appeal to Caesar becomes part of the providential route toward fulfilling that promise.

Question 9

How did Festus describe the central religious dispute?

He said the controversy involved Jesus, who had died, but whom Paul claimed was alive.

Question 10

Why did Agrippa want to hear Paul?

After hearing Festus explain the unusual case, Agrippa became interested and requested to hear Paul personally.

Question 11

What did Festus conclude about Paul?

He repeatedly acknowledged that Paul had done nothing deserving death.

Question 12

What is the central lesson of Acts 25?

God sovereignly uses legal rights, government officials, delays, and trials to protect His servant, keep the gospel moving, and bring Paul closer to Rome.

LVII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Acts 25 asks several important questions.

Do I Trust God When Opposition Repeats Itself?

Paul faced another murder plot.

Do I Judge Accusations by Evidence?

Festus eventually had to.

Am I Willing to defend myself truthfully?

Paul did.

Do I confuse submission with surrendering every right?

Paul did not.

Can I use lawful protections without placing my trust in them?

Paul did.

Do I believe God can use government for His purposes?

Acts 25 shows that He can.

Is the resurrection central to my faith?

It was central to Paul's.

Do I believe Jesus is truly alive?

That is the great issue.

Can I recognize opportunities hidden inside opposition?

Paul's trial brought him before Agrippa.

Do I trust God through delay?

Paul had already spent years waiting.

Am I willing to speak when God puts powerful people before me?

Paul was preparing to do exactly that.

LVIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“God Can Block a Trap You Never Saw”

Paul may not have known the full ambush plan when Festus refused the transfer.

But:

God knew.

Principle

Some of God's greatest protections may be dangers we never realize He prevented.

LIX. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Appealing to Law Is Not the Same as Trusting in Law”

Paul appeals to Caesar.

But Paul’s ultimate confidence remains:

God.

Principle

Use legitimate means without turning legitimate means into ultimate security.

LX. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Gospel Eventually Forces the Jesus Question”

Festus tries to summarize everything.

He arrives at:

Jesus died.

Paul says He is alive.

Principle

Every serious consideration of Christianity eventually comes to the identity, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

LXI. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Chain May Open the Door”

Paul’s chains appear restrictive.

Yet:

They give access to rulers.

Principle

God can use what limits your movement to expand your influence.

LXII. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Do Not Be Impressed by Pomp More Than Truth”

Agrippa enters with great ceremony.

Paul enters as a prisoner.

But:

Paul carries eternal truth.

Principle

Heaven evaluates greatness differently than society does.

LXIII. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“What Men Call a Trial, God May Use as a Testimony”

The officials think:

Legal hearing.

Paul sees:

Gospel opportunity.

Principle

A Christian should always ask how Christ can be made known in the circumstance at hand.

LXIV. FINAL APPLICATION

Acts Chapter 25 begins with another plot to kill Paul.

It ends with Paul standing before:

A king.

A governor.

Military officers.

Prominent citizens.

That progression is remarkable.

Paul's enemies want to:

Silence him.

Kill him.

Remove him.

But every attempt seems to expand:

His protection.

His audience.

His influence.

The leaders ask Festus:

Send Paul to Jerusalem.

They secretly plan murder.

Festus says:

No.

Come to Caesarea.

Providence.

They make charges.

They cannot prove them.

Paul says:

I have done nothing wrong.

Festus considers sending him back to Jerusalem.

Paul says:

“I appeal to Caesar.”

Then:

Rome becomes legally unavoidable.

Jesus had already said:

“You must also testify in Rome.”

Now Paul’s Roman citizenship and legal rights become part of the route.

Acts 25 therefore gives us a powerful picture of the relationship between:

Divine sovereignty.

And:

Human action.

Paul trusts God.

But Paul also:

Speaks.

Defends himself.

Uses his rights.

Appeals.

Acts wisely.

There is no contradiction.

God’s sovereignty does not turn believers into passive spectators.

Instead:

We act responsibly while trusting Him with the outcome.

Then Festus gives one of the most important summaries in the chapter.

The controversy is about:

“A man named Jesus, who had died, but Paul claimed was alive.”

Festus may not understand the significance.

But Luke’s readers do.

That is the gospel issue.

Jesus:

Was crucified.

Was buried.

Was raised.

Is alive.

Acts itself exists because:

Jesus is alive.

Paul preaches because:

Jesus is alive.

The church exists because:

Jesus is alive.

The gospel offers hope because:

Jesus is alive.

Then Agrippa enters.

With pomp.

Ceremony.

Power.

Prestige.

And Paul enters:

A prisoner.

Yet Paul is not the one spiritually impoverished.

Paul possesses:

The truth.

The promise.

The gospel.

Christ.

This teaches us:

Never judge spiritual importance by outward appearance.

The person in chains may possess greater freedom than the ruler on the throne.

Acts 25 therefore calls us to:

Trust providence.

Demand truth.

Reject false accusations.

Use lawful rights.
Refuse manipulation.
Stand upon resurrection.
Recognize open doors.
Witness before powerful people.
And remember:
God can turn:
A courtroom into a pulpit.
An appeal into a missionary route.
A prison chain into access.
An accusation into an audience.
Paul's enemies tried to stop him.
Instead:
He moved closer to Rome.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Acts Chapter 25.

Thank You that Your plans cannot be defeated by hidden schemes.

Thank You for the ways You protect Your servants from dangers they may never even see.

Give us wisdom when accusations come.

Help us distinguish:

Truth from rumor.

Evidence from assumption.

Justice from pressure.

Give us courage to defend ourselves honestly.

Teach us that trusting You does not require refusing the lawful protections You provide.

Help us use:

Rights.

Government.

Law.

Opportunity.

Wisely.

But keep our deepest trust in You.

Protect leaders from the temptation to please people instead of doing what is right.

Give rulers courage to judge fairly.

Thank You for Paul's boldness.

Thank You for his appeal to Caesar.

Thank You that what looked like a legal procedure became part of Your path toward Rome.

Help us trust Your providence when we cannot see where circumstances are leading.

Thank You above all for Jesus Christ.

Thank You that He:

Died.

Was buried.

Rose again.

And:

Is alive.

Keep the resurrection at the center of our faith.

Give us courage when You place us before people of influence.

Help us remember that worldly titles, ceremony, wealth, and power are temporary.

Your truth is eternal.

When trials come:

Make them testimony.

When doors close:

Show us the next one.

When we feel restricted:

Use us anyway.

And when opposition tries to silence Your Word:

Let the gospel travel even farther.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“After conferring with his council, Festus declared, ‘You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!’” — Acts 25:12

Central Truth

God sovereignly uses legal rights, political authorities, delays, opposition, and even imprisonment to protect His servants and advance His purposes, while the central truth of the gospel remains that Jesus Christ, who died, is alive and must be proclaimed before all people—including rulers and kings.

Acts 25 in One Sentence

Paul survives another assassination plot, answers serious but unproven accusations before Festus, lawfully appeals his case to Caesar, and is brought before King Agrippa, showing that God can use courts, rulers, legal rights, and imprisonment to move His servant steadily toward Rome while keeping the resurrection of Jesus at the center of the gospel witness.