

<b>Subject</b>	Lessons from Acts	4425
		Acts 25
<b>Title</b>	7 Lessons from Acts 25	
<b>Proposition</b>	To study Acts 25 looking for lessons to help us follow the pattern of the New Testament church.	
<b>Objective</b>	So that we can be the kind of people God would have us to be.	

### 7 LESSONS FROM ACTS 25

#### **Introduction:**

#### **1. Outline:**

- 1) Plans are made and carried out for Paul to be given a hearing before the new governor, Festus (Acts 25:1-7).**
- 2) Paul's plea is NOT GUILTY (8-9).**
- 3) Paul appeals to Caesar (10-12).**
- 4) Festus consults with King Agrippa about Paul (13-21).**
- 5) King Agrippa desires to hear the case (22).**
- 6) Festus presents Paul to King Agrippa (23-27).**

#### **2. From Barclay, DSB: Festus was a different type from Felix; we know very little about him but what we do know proves that he was a just and upright man.**

- 1) *He died after only two years in office but he died with an untainted name.*
- 2) *The Jews tried to take advantage of him; they tried to persuade him to send for Paul to come to Jerusalem; for once again they had formed a plot to assassinate Paul on the way.*
- 3) *But Festus was a Roman, with the Roman instinct for justice; and he told them to come to Caesarea and plead their case there.*
- 4) *From Paul's answer we can deduce the malicious charges which they leveled against him.*
  - 1- *They accused him of heresy, of sacrilege and of sedition.*
  - 2- *No doubt from their point of view the first charge was true, irrelevant as it was to Roman law;*
  - 3- *But the second two were deliberate lies.*
- 5) *Festus had no desire to get up against the Jews in the first days of his governorship and he offered a compromise.*
  - 1- *Was Paul, he asked, prepared to go to Jerusalem and stand his trial there while he stood by to see fair play?*
  - 2- *But Paul knew that for him there could be no such thing as fair play at Jerusalem and he took his great decision.*
  - 3- *If a Roman citizen felt he was not getting justice in a provincial court, he could appeal direct to the Emperor.*
  - 4- *Only if the man was a murderer, a pirate, or a bandit caught in the act, was the appeal invalid.*
  - 5- *In all other cases the local procedure had to be superseded and the claimant had to be sent to Rome for the personal decision of the Emperor.*
- 6) *When Paul uttered the fateful words, "I appeal to Caesar," Festus had no choice; and so Paul, in very different circumstances from those of which he had dreamed, had set his foot upon the first step of the road that led to Rome.*

#### **DISCUSSION: One LESSON from Acts**

### 1. The SAD state of Jewish leaders of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century (v. 3).

**Acts 25:3** Then the high priest and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they petitioned him, asking a favor against him, that he would **summon him to Jerusalem—while they lay in ambush along the road to kill him.**—NKJV.

1. Here is an innocent man, Paul, who had not done that which had been charged against him.
  - 1) He had not nor ever would take a Gentile into the temple at Jerusalem.
    - 1- The charge was completely made up.
    - 2- Acts 21:27-29 **And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, (28) Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. (29) (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)**
  - 2) That charge against him had never been proved.
  - 3) The uproar of murderous hatred that CONTINUED in Jerusalem was the result of jealousy begun among non-Judean Jews who had observed Paul preaching Christ and gaining converts from among their numbers.
  - 4) They came to Jerusalem to cause trouble for Paul.
  - 5) They were able to stir up their Jewish brethren to the point where they would abandon any prohibitions God's Law placed upon them.
2. **AND**, here is a NEW governor from Rome, totally unfamiliar with the situation and the charges against Paul.
  - 1) These Jews had sent letters to Rome to have Felix replaced.
  - 2) They full well knew that the new governor would want to do favors for them to get this new relationship started in the right direction.
  - 3) These deceitful Jews would take advantage of the ignorance of the new governor for the purpose of **MURDERing** the Apostle Paul!!!
  - 4) If they could just get Paul out of the garrison and on the road, they knew what to do with him.
3. This is how **VERY LOW** the bar of morality of the spiritual leaders of Israel had become!
  - 1) Does this help us to understand better the prophecy Jesus made of these people?
  - 2) Matthew 23:38-39 **Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. (39) For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.**
    - 1- **YOUR HOUSE IS LEFT UNTO YOU DESOLATE...** Notice that Jesus is not talking any longer about the TEMPLE being God's house.
    - 2- It has now become YOUR HOUSE because they had rejected the Messiah and judgment was on the way.
    - 3- He foretells a **COMING IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**.
    - 4- This **COMING** was the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
  - 4) Even after hearing this warning from the Son of God, **even at this late date of the time of Acts 25**, these leaders were still FAR from God.
    - 1- They still rejected the Christ.
    - 2- They still rejected the messengers of the Christ.

- 3- They still were seeking to murder the great Apostle who had been specially called by the Son of God.
4. Let us ALL LEARN that there will always be evil and rejection of the Lord's will.
  - 1) BUT we must never forget that the rejection of the Lord's will changes it NOT.
  - 2) There will be a Judgment Day at which those who reject His will receive their just reward for disobedience!!!
  - 3) The Jews did, and ALL will also!

## One LESSON from Acts

**2. Another POWERFUL evidence of the damage of DIVISION (2-3).**

Acts 25:2-3 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him, (3) And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.

1. **DIVISION = DESTRUCTIVE COMPETITION; UNITY = PEACE, STRENGTH, AND PROVES WE BELONG TO CHRIST!**
  - 1) John 17:20-21 **Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; (21) That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.**
    - 1- Having UNITED followers was important to our Lord.
    - 2- He tells us that unity in His followers will promote growth in the number of believers as those unbelievers SEE our united state!
  - 2) Ephesians 2:13-14 **But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (14) For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;**
    - 1- BOTH Jew & Gentile are intended to become ONE through the IN-CHRIST-relationship.
    - 2- That system which had a middle wall of petition was nailed to the cross (Col 2.14).
    - 3- These Jews have misunderstood the Messianic prophecies and are no longer God's people as they seek to maintain that old middle wall.
2. These Jews, thinking they were still God's people, simply because they could trace their lineage back to Abraham, were willing to do anything to protect their supposed status.
  - 1) The people of Jewish background who continued to be God's people after Acts 2 were those who obeyed the gospel and were willing to be united with all who would do the same—there were 3,000 of them who obeyed the Lord on that Pentecost Day (2.41).
  - 2) The people of Jewish background who continued living under the LAW that had been nailed to the cross were no longer God's people.
3. Division is BAD and this text shows that so clearly!
4. From the prayer Jesus prayed in John 17 it has to be obvious that He cannot be pleased with the division that is so massive in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
  - 1) It is UNITY that makes the strong impression on unbelievers to become believers (Jn 17.21).
  - 2) It is DIVISION that confuses precious souls and causes them to choose options that are no part of God's will.

## One LESSON from Acts

### 3. Paul's Response to Festus SUPPORTS Capital Punishment (11).

**Acts 25:11** For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.

1. Paul, an **INSPIRED** Apostle of Jesus, responds to Festus' proposal with words that acknowledge the right of the state to take his life if the charges were serious enough and proven.
2. The death penalty is often debated in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century, but it seems they had a much clearer understanding of it here in this context.
3. For Christians, it is hard to argue against capital punishment with this text and others in Scripture
4. Paul wrote of civil government in Romans 13 and has this to say as a description of the power of the state to execute God's wrath upon the evil—Romans 13:4 **For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.**

One LESSON from Acts

### 4. There is a REMINDER that civil governments are ordained of God (11).

**Acts 25:11** For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar. + **Romans 13:1** Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

1. It is hard **not to see** in Luke's recording of Paul's visit to Jerusalem and the resulting arrest and imprisonment, the providential hand of God.
  - 1) Paul had indicated his future plan of visiting Rome after his trip to Jerusalem—Acts 19:21 **After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.**
  - 2) Also, Jesus had appeared to Paul at Jerusalem with a message: Acts 23:11 **And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.**
2. Paul knew because he was **HOLY-SPIRIT** inspired to know that God has ultimate control.
  - 1) He had confidence that his Roman citizenship was a great blessing which could be used to accomplish the Lord's will in his life.
  - 2) He wrote to the Roman Christians: Romans 13:3-4 **For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: (4) For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.**
  - 3) Paul was an innocent man and as an innocent man, he took advantage of the civil laws designed to protect Roman citizens.
  - 4) He was given a **FREE** ticket to Rome, the very place that Paul wanted to be next, with the blessing of the Roman authorities.

3. You and I in order to be faithful to the Lord must also obey the laws of the land—that is the clear teaching of the first part of Romans 13.
- 1) Christians, as they follow the teaching of Romans 13, should be the very best citizens of whatever country in which they hold citizenship.
  - 2) That is the Lord's will.
  - 3) We should add, that the exception to this principle would be when the civil government requires the Christian to disobey God.
    - 1- We cannot disobey God simply to please the civil government.
    - 2- At one time the apostles were commanded NOT to preach Jesus—Acts 4:18-20 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. (19) But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. (20) For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

#### One LESSON from Acts

**5. One of the VITAL messages of the apostles was that Jesus Rose from the Dead (19).**

Acts 25:19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

1. Festus had a sharp mind and he pretty fairly **cut to the heart of the matter** that the Jews held against Paul when he described it to King Agrippa.
  - 1) The main problem was that the Jews had killed the Christ and the Christ had not remained in the tomb, but rose up out of it!
  - 2) Furthermore, His followers were NOT going to be quiet about that message!
  - 3) 3,000 Jews came to realize this truth and appreciate it on Pentecost Day of Acts 2, and they were forgiven of their sins.
  - 4) The RESURRECTION was a powerful message which was received with encouraging results. Acts 6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.
2. Isn't it amazing that Luke shows the centrality of the message of the RISEN SAVIOR even in this verse where two unbelievers are discussing a prisoner they did not know what to do with.
3. One of the great marks of distinction for Christians which was so successful in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century likewise needs to be shouted from the rooftops in our 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

#### One LESSON from Acts

**6. First century preachers had no fear to proclaim the gospel to the POWERFUL (23).**

Acts 25:23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.

1. Paul is called before the king, but with great BOLDNESS he knew he was the specially called messenger of THE KING.
  - 1) He had the most important message this king had ever heard and he had no hesitation to call on this powerful king to submit to King Jesus!

- 2) The next chapter gives us Luke's summary of what Paul told this powerful man.
2. It is SO VERY SAD that this king set the **sorry** example which many who have followed after him have attached themselves to: **ALMOST PERSUADED (26.28)**.
  - 1) Without a doubt, Paul's message was strong, truthful, and clearly demanded an immediate response.
  - 2) Luke also records for us Paul's response to this foolish reply from the powerful king—Acts 26:29 **And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.**

### One LESSON from Acts

## 7. Governor Festus was SO CORRECT when he indicated some things are UNREASONABLE! (27).

**Acts 25:27** For it seemeth to me **unreasonable** to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.

1. 89.19 ἄλογος<sup>b</sup>, ov: pertaining to not providing a reason or cause, in view of something being contrary to reason—'unreasonable, without basis, absurd'<sup>1</sup>  
**alpha-privative**
2. **Festus knew that Paul should not even be in custody of the state.**
  - 1) **He had been charged with many things, but no one had given any proof that he had done those things for which he had been charged!**
  - 2) **HIS PREDICAMENT:** How can we explain demanding time of the Emperor to deal with a problem so simple: **LET THE INNOCENT MAN GO FREE.**
3. **Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.**
  - 1) **Part of what it means to be created in the image of God is that man has the ability to reason.**
  - 2) **This ability sets man apart from all of the rest of creation.**
  - 3) **Having such a remarkable distinction from the creative hands of the Omnipotent God is so special that It is a terrible lack of stewardship for man not to use properly his ability to reason!**
4. **It is such a discouraging thing to have the truth, to know it well, and then to see people UNREASONABLY reject that truth!**
  - 1) **This is one of Satan's powerful weapons.**
  - 2) **He delights in the UNREASONABLENESS of mankind.**
  - 3) **For those who seek to defend THE FAITH, there will be discouraging moments when we present the truth boldly and accurately and yet it will be rejected by unreasonable men.**
  - 4) **What we must do is continue in the knowledge that WE ARE BEING GOOD STEWARDS of our blessing of the ability to reason, and continue to search for those who are also likewise inclined!**

### Conclusion:

<sup>1</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), 778.

1. **Acts is a rich study for Christians.**
2. **We are reading about the history of our spiritual family.**
3. **Let us continue to study it carefully and urgently apply its lessons to our lives.**