



# ACTS 25:1-12

TRUSTING THE LORD WHEN OPPOSITION COMES



# INTRODUCTION

- The Lord has the power to redirect the hearts of the authorities in government
  - Proverbs 21:1
- The Lord uses governing authorities to reward good and restrain evil
  - 1 Peter 2:13–14
- In this passage, we will see Paul using his rights as a citizen to promote the purpose and will of the Lord

# TIME MAY NOT COOL THE ANIMOSITY OF PEOPLE AGAINST JESUS CHRIST AND HIS AMBASSADORS (25:1-5)

*<sup>1</sup> Now three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. <sup>2</sup> And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews laid out their case against Paul, and they urged him, <sup>3</sup> asking as a favor against Paul that he summon him to Jerusalem—because they were planning an ambush to kill him on the way.*

- Felix left Paul in prison in Caesarea as a favor to the Jews
  - What we know about Paul is that wherever he was located, he was making much of Jesus as the promised Savior and Lord
    - Philippians 1:20–21
  - Without passivity or shame we must honoring Christ in life and death
- When Festus took over the governorship, he made a trip from Caesarea to Jerusalem to gain a better understanding of the Jews he was responsible to govern

## TIME MAY NOT COOL THE ANIMOSITY OF PEOPLE AGAINST JESUS CHRIST AND HIS AMBASSADORS (25:1-5)

- Even after two years, resentment for Paul from the leaders of the Jews was not in short supply
  - Their murderous contempt for Paul continues to boil like a cauldron
    - John 15:18–19
  - Viewing themselves as protectors of the Law of Moses, they justify their violation of the Law with lying and murder
    - Romans 2:17–24
  - These Jews are blind and powerless in regard to personal holiness
- <sup>4</sup> Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea and that he himself intended to go there shortly. <sup>5</sup> “So,” said he, “let the men of authority among you go down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them bring charges against him.”*
- Festus may know something about the underhanded practices of the Jews regarding Paul
  - Festus keeps the Roman citizen, Paul, in Caesarea where he is going

## WHEN INEXPERIENCED GOVERNING AUTHORITIES ARE GETTING THEIR BEARINGS, GOD IS STILL IN CONTROL (25:6-8)

*<sup>6</sup> After he stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought.*

- Finishing his official business of making connections, the new governor, Festus, returns to Caesarea
- As promised, he took his place in the court to hear the case of the Jewish leaders against Paul

*<sup>7</sup> When he had arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges against him that they could not prove.*

- The Jews push forward several charges of capital offenses
- Luke also indicates that these charges fail to be convincing
  - Psalm 109:1–4

## WHEN INEXPERIENCED GOVERNING AUTHORITIES ARE GETTING THEIR BEARINGS, GOD IS STILL IN CONTROL (25:6-8)

<sup>8</sup> *Paul argued in his defense, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense.”*

■ Paul’s defense before Festus is summarized into three categories by Luke

1. Paul did not and does not speak or act against the Law

■ Paul does not speak and act against the Law because His Lord does not oppose the Law, but fulfills it

■ Matthew 5:17–18

2. Paul did not do anything to desecrate or dishonor the temple in Jerusalem

3. Paul did nothing to violate Roman law or Caesar

# THE LORD CAN GUIDE AND PROTECT HIS PEOPLE THROUGH THE LAW OF THE LAND (25:9-12)

<sup>9</sup> *But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, “Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?”*

- Like a typical politician, Festus desires to appease all parties, making as many constituents pleased with him as possible
- To shore up support from the Jews, Festus offers to take Paul back to Jerusalem for his trial
- To show support for Paul, Festus tells Paul that the proceedings will occur with him functioning as the final judge
- You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can never fool all the people all the time.” – Abraham Lincoln at the Lincoln/Douglas debate
- When compromise and appeasement are the goals, truth and justice will not win the day
- C. H. Spurgeon, “We ought never to fear those who are defending the wrong side, for since God is not with them, their wisdom is folly, their strength is weakness, and their glory is their shame.”
- The purpose of our Lord can be carried out, even through the mess of bureaucracy

## THE LORD CAN GUIDE AND PROTECT HIS PEOPLE THROUGH THE LAW OF THE LAND (25:9-12)

*<sup>10</sup> But Paul said, “I am standing before Caesar’s tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well. <sup>11</sup> If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar.”*

- Paul rejects the negotiations offered by Festus
- Paul knows his rights as a Roman citizen and is willing to use them
- Paul defends the government’s right to exercise capital punishment
- Some say that Paul shouldn’t have appealed to Caesar, because it is likely he would have been set free (Cf. Acts 26:32)
- Paul knows the promise of the Lord
  - Acts 23:11
- Appealing to Caesar is Paul’s right as a Roman citizen and guaranteed he would go to Rome
- The Lord is guiding His servant with the law of the land



## THE LORD CAN GUIDE AND PROTECT HIS PEOPLE THROUGH THE LAW OF THE LAND (25:9-12)

*<sup>12</sup> Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, “To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.”*

- It is unclear why Festus sought the opinion of his council
- It is possible that Festus, being a new governor, wanted to make sure Paul had the grounds to make the appeal
- Sending a prisoner to Rome at the expense of the government was not a small commitment

# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How can you prepare yourself for the abiding resentment of those who reject Jesus Christ, and you as His gospel ambassador?
- What have opposition and trying circumstances revealed about your heart that God needs to help you change?
- Are you aware of your rights as a citizen and are you prepared to stand on them for the sake of the gospel?



# ACTS 25:1-12

TRUSTING THE LORD WHEN OPPOSITION COMES

