

# Acts 25:13-27

Trusting the authority of the Lord when facing earthly authorities



# Festus requests advice from Agrippa and Bernice about sending Paul to Caesar (25:13-21)

*<sup>13</sup> Now when some days had passed, Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Caesarea and greeted Festus.*

- Rome appointed Herod Agrippa II to rule over a region northeast of the province where Festus was the newly appointed procurator
- King Agrippa and his sister Bernice came to Caesarea to welcome Festus to his new position
- Julia Bernice, the sister of Agrippa II, accompanied him on his congratulatory trip
- These are the worldly rulers who will give their opinion about the Lord's ambassador, the Apostle Paul



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*<sup>14</sup> And as they stayed there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, "There is a man left prisoner by Felix, <sup>15</sup> and when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews laid out their case against him, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him.*

- In the course of their extended visit, Festus explained the how he inherited Paul as a prisoner from the previous proconsul, Felix
- Festus recounted his trip to Jerusalem and how the Jewish leaders requested a sentence of condemnation and death for Paul
  - The leaders were attempting to manipulate the new proconsul to execute Paul as a favor to them
  - This new insight reinforces their hatred of Paul



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*<sup>16</sup> I answered them that it was not the custom of the Romans to give up anyone before the accused met the accusers face to face and had opportunity to make his defense concerning the charge laid against him.*

*<sup>17</sup> So when they came together here, I made no delay, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought.*

- The refusal of Festus to put a Roman citizen to death is why they asked Paul to be brought to Jerusalem to be tried again before Festus
- They were scheming to ambush and murder Paul on the way
- But Festus required them to come to Caesarea to present their charges against Paul



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*18 When the accusers stood up, they brought no charge in his case of such evils as I supposed. 19 Rather they had certain points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive.*

- Festus expected them to present solid evidence against Paul of capital crimes
- Their case, and Paul's rebuttal, showed that the Jews took issue with Paul's teaching, interpretation, and focus of the Scripture
  - The Jews reject Jesus as the promised Messiah coming as Savior and Lord for people of all nations
  - Paul communicated that Jesus was the Messiah and that His death, burial, and resurrection were the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation
  - 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
- It is encouraging to see the evangelistic wisdom of God to take the gospel to the nations being put on open display
  - Luke 24:44-47
  - Faithful witnesses are empowered as they live out the rule and reign of Jesus Christ
  - This promise is true for us



# Festus requests advice from Agrippa and Bernice about sending Paul to Caesar (25:13-21)

*<sup>20</sup> Being at a loss how to investigate these questions, I asked whether he wanted to go to Jerusalem and be tried there regarding them. <sup>21</sup> But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of the emperor, I ordered him to be held until I could send him to Caesar.”*

- Festus tells Agrippa and Bernice that he reasoned that the differences of opinion between Paul and the Jewish leaders would probably be best resolved in Jerusalem
- When Festus asked Paul if he would return to Jerusalem for an additional hearing, Paul knew that wouldn't go well
- Paul knew the Jews would lie and scheme to kill him
- Jesus told Paul that he would be going to Rome to continue sharing the gospel
- Paul utilized his right as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar, which guaranteed his arrival in Rome



# Prisoner Paul appears before the pomp of Roman authorities (25:22-27)

*22 Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I would like to hear the man myself.”  
“Tomorrow,” said he, “you will hear him.”*

- Agrippa is curious and wants to hear what Paul has to say about Jesus
- Agrippa is familiar with the Scripture and the teaching and practices of the Jews
- He is likely aware of the stir Jesus caused



# Prisoner Paul appears before the pomp of Roman authorities (25:22-27)

*<sup>23</sup> So on the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. Then, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. <sup>24</sup> And Festus said, "King Agrippa and all who are present with us, you see this man about whom the whole Jewish people petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. <sup>25</sup> But I found that he had done nothing deserving death. And as he himself appealed to the emperor, I decided to go ahead and send him.*

- Not only is Agrippa curious, but it is also an opportunity for Agrippa, Bernice, and Festus to put themselves on display as Roman leaders, allowing them to shine in the public spotlight
  - Agrippa, Bernice, and Festus wear their royal vestments and captivate the attention of the public
  - It allows them to parade their military might under their direct authority
  - In many ways, this event is a self-gratulatory display of their glory in personal achievement
- As the presiding potentate, Festus summons the pathetic prisoner Paul
- Looks are deceiving
  - 2 Kings 6:17
- Festus introduces Paul to Agrippa and Bernice, the prisoner who is citizen of Rome appealing to Caesar



# Prisoner Paul appears before the pomp of Roman authorities (25:22-27)

*<sup>26</sup> But I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore I have brought him before you all, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write. <sup>27</sup> For it seems to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not to indicate the charges against him.”*

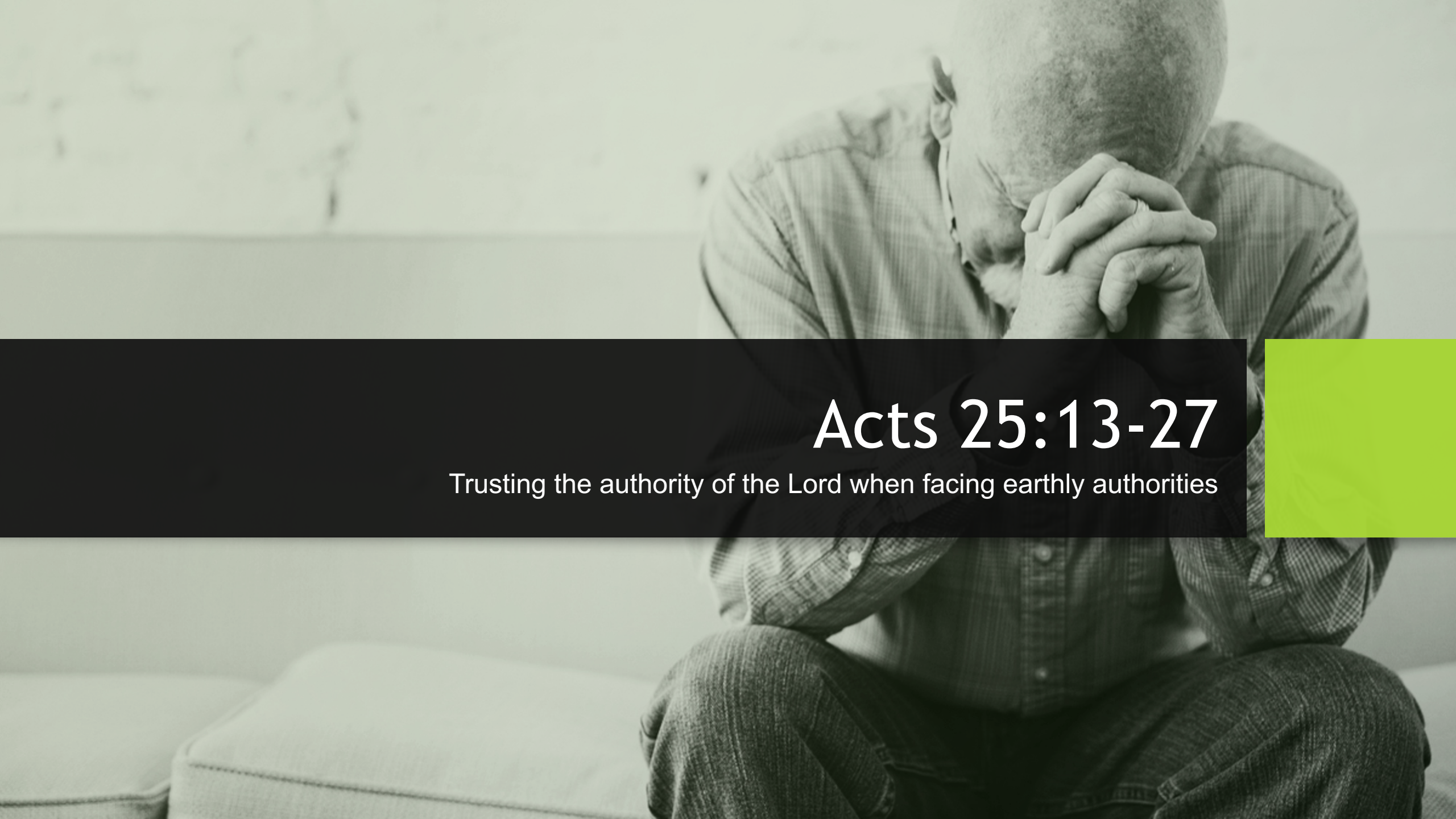
- Festus inherited Paul as a prisoner and wants to maintain the peace in the face of antagonized Jews
- Agrippa's visit presents an opportunity for Paul to be assessed by a ruler who is familiar with the Jews and their religious practices and Agrippa also has the strong backing of Rome
- As Paul stands in solitude in the presence of nobility and earthly power, he stands in the strength of the reigning Lord of Glory, who is sovereign over His earth
  - Luke 12:11-12
- Jesus chose us to be His people and He sends us out to walk in gospel light and proclaim gospel light
- We are not alone



# Questions to Consider

- If you are called before people of power and influence because of your devotion to the Lord and truth, what should you do?
- How do you see with this story of Paul that we are immortal until God is finished with us?
- What sins and weaknesses do you need the grace of the Lord to repent of today?
- What will help you to stand for the gospel and how can you help your brothers and sisters in Christ to stand as well?





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