

**to be expert in  
all customs and questions which  
are amongst the  
jews**

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***Acts 25:22 – 26:4***

~ The pagan pomp and purple pageantry of Agrippa and pearls of Bernice will adorn this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God as Paul appears in the court of Festus. Golden braids and brass hats would have been displayed at this event in a parade of ruling elite from all areas of the Roman Empire. The elect and educated, intelligentsia and sophisticates all made a mad scramble to see and be seen at this party; and they turned out in full regalia. Pride, ostentation in a dastardly display - under the guise of refined dignity – the likes of which only Rome could produce, was happening at this place and at this time on this day. As the affair barrels into high gear, the Great Doors to the Throne Room swing open for all to have a glimpse inside. That's when Paul the prisoner is brought out in chains and prison clothes. The only reason this function has been called is to hear this unknown, unimpressive man, speak.

Paul traveled extensively throughout all of the major regions in the Roman Empire, preaching along the way on his three missionary journeys. We considered his travel log completely in multiple previous reports. The light of Heaven was upon Paul's face. He would have fit right in with this frenetic crowd had he still been Saul of Tarsus, the murdering Pharisee; but, here, he has no scintillating personality. Even so, a higher assemblage could not have been gathered in that day; and they desired to hear Paul. Of course, it's just morbid curiosity they are seeking to satisfy. It's very formal and very stiff. The Lord Jesus has already said, "if they hated Me, they're going to hate you, too!" So, this passage reveals what the grace of God can do for a man. Paul is energized by the Holy Spirit. It is a wonderful thing to live by faith in the Spirit of God, friends; He Who loved me and gave Himself for me.

This section of Scripture has had a tremendous effect on many people throughout the ages, both saved and lost. This is a heinous scene that

began in our previous report as Paul appealed to Caesar. After that appeal was made, Paul could not have been legally freed; but he should have been set free a long time ago. Interestingly, Agrippa could not free himself from the damning effects of his sin. The only lawful aspect of this proceeding was none; except through making his appeal, Paul removed himself from the hands of these two madmen, Festus and Agrippa. Nonetheless, we're left with Paul facing Agrippa; one in a purple robe and the other in prison clothes. One is on a throne and the other in shackles. One wears a crown and the other bound in chains. One is the slave to sin and the other free and forgiven in the liberty of the True and Living God.

Now, let's consider who they have in custody: a common prisoner, Paul, a Roman citizen; His case is going to the highest court in Rome. The problem is: Paul has never even been legally charged in a formal manner. The accusation was that Paul was teaching "the Way" – because there wasn't even a name for "Christianity." That made whatever Paul's so-called crime was just a bit vague. The other problem is Paul had committed no crimes. They don't even have a real charge against him. That makes for one embarrassing custody case. This is the state Paul was subjected to as he preached the Gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ to Roman rulers in this report....

## XXV

***22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.***

***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.***

***24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer.***

***25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.***

***26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O King Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.***

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

## **XXVI**

***1 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:***

~ When the Lord Jesus Christ apprehended Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road, the Holy Spirit told Paul he would appear before kings and rulers and bare the Gospel to them. Well, this marks the high point of Paul appearing before kings in his ministry. It was God's will that Paul appear before Agrippa. This is when Paul seems to have become a little impatient. He had appeared before the mob in Jerusalem; gone before the captain of the guard; went to the Sanhedrin, met Felix, and then privately with Felix and Drusilla; then Paul went before Festus for the first time; and now Agrippa and Festus. None of those men ever understood the background of the charges against Paul; and they didn't understand the Gospel he was teaching, either.

I don't think anyone has ever had quite the opportunity Paul had to preach the Gospel to this level of authority. Agrippa belonged to the worst Italian mafia family anyone has ever known. Ahab and Jezebel were Sunday school kids compared to the Herod patriarchs. Even so, Agrippa was an acutely intelligent man; irrespective of his murderous background. That's who was sitting on the throne in this royal function complete with the the blowing of trumpets. Kipling said, "... here you have all the boasting of the Gentiles." I'm sure the setting in the castle would have made Hollywood seem blasé. All the upper echelon and prominent persons of the classes were present.

However, this is not a trial as we discover in verse thirty-two of this chapter. Paul is not presenting a defense; he is asserting his rights. This is God's way of introducing the rulership in Rome to what "The Way" really was. We saw in our previous several reports how Christianity didn't even have a name at this time in which we are studying; and they called teaching the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ "The Way." This was something new; and Agrippa wanted to be a thoroughly informed leader....

***2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:***

***3 Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.***

~ Paul stood before a man who was instructed and learned; and who should have understood what Paul was saying. Agrippa knew the Mosaic Law well. Paul knew the Mosaic System well - and Paul knew Christ Jesus, too. The law has new meaning to Paul now; and Paul's soul is being flooded with new light. Christ is now the end of the law as a standard for righteousness. What God demanded He is now graciously supplying. Paul is rejoicing in this opportunity, and he wants to convey that feeling to Agrippa. There is a consummate passion filling the soul of Paul the apostle as we end this report from our Spiritual Safari. This is Paul's masterpiece....

***4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;***

~ Paul begins testifying before Agrippa in this report; and we conclude with a dramatic scene. Paul was well known in Jerusalem. His entire life was well known to all of these people. Paul was outstanding from the beginning; and this account is the pinnacle of his apostolic life. The next throne the unsaved will see will have the Lord Jesus Christ reigning on it. Christ bore the judgment of that throne for us. If you have not accepted Christ, you will appear before Him for judgment. These are eternal verities that should be

important issues, to say the least. God is affording King Agrippa the greatest opportunity he will receive in his life ~

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