**Acts 23:12-26:32**

When we left Paul in the last class, he stood between the Sadducees and the Pharisees in Jerusalem. There was great confusion about what to do with Paul. There was a dissention among the people. Fearing that Paul would be torn to pieces, the Roman commander ordered Paul to be taken away from them and brought back to the barracks. [Acts 23:7-10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+23%3A7-10&version=NASB)

About 40 Jews took part in a plot to kill Paul, convincing the chief priests and the elders to take part in a deception to convince the Romans into turning Paul over to the Jews for a more thorough investigation. [Acts 23:12-15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+23%3A12-15&version=NASB)

 Observations-This scene looks very reminiscent of the plot to kill Jesus. [John 11:47-53](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+11%3A47-53&version=NASB)
 These Jews will stop at nothing to eliminate the threat that Paul poses on their
 way of life. They ignore the very law that they profess to hold sacred in order to maintain their
 current status. Do we do this today? Does the gospel threaten to turn our world upside down?
 Or right side up? Do we embrace it or run from it?

Paul’s nephew heard of this plot and reported it to the commander, convincing him to ***not*** release Paul to the Jews. The commander instead sent Paul to Caesarea under heavy guard, so that he might be judged by Felix the governor. The commander(Lysias) explains in a letter to Felix that he sees no reason under Roman law to punish Paul. [Acts 23:23-35](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+23%3A23-35&version=NASB)

After being held for 5 days, the Jews arrived to Caesarea with a lawyer, to make their case before Felix. When given the opportunity to speak, Paul refutes the accusations laid out against him and emphasizes that the Jews have no proof against him. He then goes on to tell what he has been doing. Worshipping the same God as the Jews, and proclaiming that Jesus was not abolishing the law, but fulfilling it. [Acts 24:10-21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+24%3A10-21&version=NASB)

Felix put away the Jews and told them that he would make a decision when Lysias the commander arrived, keeping Paul in jail, but under good conditions. Paul was visited by Felix and his wife Drusilla many times over the next two years. Paul preached Jesus to them, but remained in prison. Felix was eventually succeeded by Porcius Festus, but left Paul in prison to appease the Jews. [Acts 24:23-27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+24%3A23-27&version=NASB)

Observations- Paul stated his case with confidence. The gospel which he speaks has implications not only for the Jews, but to the Romans as well. Yet neither group has any real proof by which to convict him. When Paul preached to Felix and Drusilla, Felix was frightened. The ramifications of the gospel message on the Roman Empire would be no less impactful that with the Jews. Do we speak our case for Jesus with confidence? Do we trust in the promises of God?

When the new governor(Porcius Festus) took his place in Caesarea, he travelled down to Jerusalem. The Jews reintroduced charges against Paul and asked Festus to bring Paul back to Jerusalem to be tried. This was just another plot to have Paul killed while in transit. Festus refused at this time to bring Paul from Caesarea and told the Jews to come back to Caesarea and try him there. About ten days later, Paul was brought out again and charges made against him. Paul again insisted on his innocence and used his Roman citizenship to appeal to Caesar. After several days, King Agrippa arrived in Caesarea. Festus summarized Paul’s case to Agrippa and Agrippa agreed to hear him. The next day, Paul was presented before Agrippa and other prominent men of the city. [Acts 25](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+25&version=NASB)

 Observations- Festus is in a difficult spot. He finds no reason to kill Paul by any Roman measure.
 Paul wants to appeal to Caesar. But Festus can’t send him to Caesar with no Roman charges. So
 he’s hoping that Agrippa may find some fault in Paul that he can document and send to Caesar.

In Acts 26, Paul presented his case before Agrippa. He summarized his previous ways as a Pharisee and his interaction with Jesus on the road to Damascus. He summarized his declaration of the gospel message to both the Jews and the Gentiles. Agrippa was evidently intrigued by Paul’s message and even said that Paul might convince him to become a Christian in a short time. Agrippa found no fault in Paul. [Acts 26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+26&version=NASB)

 Observations- While Paul has been in prison for over two years, he has maintained his
 innocence in regards to both Roman and Mosaic Law. He continues to preach the Gospel and
 urges everyone who hears his words to be like him. Paul continues to obey the authorities yet
 does not abandon his faith. He is honest and genuine in his interactions with both Jews and
 Romans. Can we maintain our innocence in regard to our country’s law and the law of God?
 Can we allow the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from our sins and transgressions and work for
 Him?