

Acts 25-26

Having spent two years in prison, sidelined and largely ignored, Paul must have been champing at the bit to get out and get on with his work, but that is simply not possible and with the end of Felix, dismissed for corruption and incompetence, the way is open for Paul to know, one way or another, his fate. Would he live or would he die? Thus, in this session we come to the trial before Festus, complicated with the appearance of Agrippa, before whom Paul also appears.

Paul gives his own personal testimony of how he came to faith - again slightly differently from last time, but he continually wants to tell others of the way that God saved him - he who had been so opposed to God. Paul makes the most of every opportunity that he is given; even though in prison that is not much.

Read Acts 25.1-12

How do you think that Paul felt about this prolonged imprisonment when he couldn't go round preaching, nor visit the churches he had founded?

Festus is new in post, so what are the leaders doing here and how does he respond?

The same baseless charges are brought and Paul defends himself, but what does Festus offer?

What does Paul have to resort to?

Read Acts 25.13-22

Why does Festus involve Agrippa in Paul's case while Agrippa is visiting?

What shows that Festus does not know what is really going on here?

Read Acts 25.23-27

Why does Festus not know what to put in the letter that will go to Rome with Paul?

What position is Festus putting Agrippa in by doing this?

Read Acts 26.1-8

Before Agrippa the Jews are not summoned to lay their charges. What difference does this make to what happens with Agrippa?

Paul gives a very short defence to his normal accusers arguments - why does he bother?

At what point does he finish this "normal" defence and how in particular with Agrippa?

Read Acts 26.9-23

Why does Paul spend so much time telling Agrippa of his conversion experience?

Are there any differences that you can see from his previous descriptions?

What is Paul's greater aim here?

Read Acts 26.24-32

Why does Festus interrupt?

How does Paul turn this to his advantage?

What is their conclusion and why is this (in part) a lie?

Reflect on how Paul seems willing to be patient and even sidelined for the long term good. How do you feel when things do not turn out well and you have missed chances etc. What might this passage encourage you with?