

TABLE TALK

FAMILY DISCUSSION GUIDE for November 13 – November 19, 2022

“ACTS IN 30” Chapter 25: *Paul Appeals to Caesar’s Court*

CHAPTER OVERVIEW: After Paul spent two years of being kept under house arrest in Caesarea, a new Roman Governor is appointed to take over for Felix. This new Governor – Festus – wants to hear Paul’s case tried again in Acts 25. Festus also invites the King of the Jewish province – King Agrippa II – to also **judge Paul’s case**. Agrippa II was from the line of the notorious Herodian dynasty. His great-grandfather killed all Jewish males under 2 years old when Jesus was born (Matt. 2:16-18). His grandfather had John the Baptist decapitated (Matthew 14:1-12). His father, Agrippa I, had the Apostle James killed by the sword and arrested Peter (Acts 12:1-3). Agrippa II hoped to have Festus release Paul to him so that he could execute him, **but God had other plans:** Paul will go to Rome (Acts 23:11).

DAY 1 Paul’s Defense Before Governor Festus

READ: Acts 25:1-12

REFLECT: Three things stand out about the intentions of Paul, Festus, and the Jews: ¹Paul wants to obey Jesus and continue his ministry in Rome (Acts 23:11). ²Festus wants to appease the Jews who could start trouble in his province. ³The Jews want to assassinate Paul (v. 3). The Jews again failed to prove their case against Paul, therefore Festus declares he will be sent to Rome at Paul’s request (vs. 11).

JOURNAL or DISCUSS:

Context Question: Read Matthew 27:11-22. What similarities do you notice between Jesus’ corrupt trial and Paul’s trial here in Acts 25?

Application Question: Do you believe Paul compromised by appealing his case be sent to a corrupt leader like Caesar? Why/why not?

DAY 2 Paul’s Defense Described by Festus to King Agrippa II

READ: Acts 25: 13-22

REFLECT: Festus realizes that he doesn’t have a real clear case against Paul to bother the Emperor Caesar with, so he asks King Agrippa II for his advice on the case. Agrippa decides to hear the case and judge the merits of Paul’s case himself.

JOURNAL or DISCUSS:

Context Question: This Agrippa comes from a long line of ungodly rulers who reigned in Judea. Who were some others? (see Overview)

Application Question: Psalm 92:7 says, “*though the wicked sprout like grass and evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever.*” How do you feel when a “wicked” person rules over a nation or a people? How should we respond?

DAY 3 Paul’s Defense Before King Agrippa II

READ: Acts 25:23-27

REFLECT: King Agrippa II enters the grand courtroom with “*great pomp*” (v. 23). He is accompanied by his wife – Bernice – who is also his sister by an incestuous relationship. There is little doubt that Agrippa II hopes to find Paul guilty of something so that he can send him to Jerusalem where he could be executed - like his father did with the Apostle James (see Acts 12:1-2).

JOURNAL or DISCUSS:

Context Question: Review Acts 12:20-24 about Agrippa’s II father. What happened to him and what happened with the Gospel after?

Application Question: Paul was not allowed to speak during the beginning of his case as it is being described to Agrippa by Festus. How would you feel if you were “silenced” and not allowed to share your side of a story? What is a Christ-like response?

DAY 4 Everyone – Believers and Unbelievers - Will Stand Before the Judgement Seat of Christ One Day

READ: II Corinthians 5:10; Romans 2:1-11; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:11-15; I Corinthians 6:9-11; II Timothy 4:8; I Peter 5:4

REFLECT: In a first century Roman courtroom, the Judge (Agrippa or Festus in the case in Acts 25) would be exalted on a platform sometimes 15 feet high above the defendant...looking down on them and eventually casting judgement on them for good or for bad. Take time to review the above verses that tell about the Judgement Day of Christ. Think about how important it will be for you to have **Jesus Christ as your “Advocate”** (I John 2:1). Then pray and ask the Lord to show you how your everyday decisions impact your eternity.

JOURNAL or DISCUSS:

Context Question: For **unbelievers**, their “day in court” at the Judgment Seat of Christ will be dreadful. However, for **believers**, it will be a day where rewards, crowns, inheritances and blessings will be given out. After reading through the above verses, what are some other passages in the Bible that discuss this incredibly important day?

Application Question: Having an eternal perspective in our everyday lives is incredibly important – both now and for all eternity. How can having an eternal perspective with these verses in mind **motivate you to keep putting God first each day?** What are some specific ways that you can prioritize **Jesus first** more this week (personal prayer and devotion; finances; time; gathering with other believers; serving those less fortunate; sharing the Gospel with others, etc...)?