

THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS WERE PROVIDED BY REX ROMEISER. The following is Rex's own research, some of it is material from today's IHOPer's conversation, and some are my reflections.

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY**

19 Acts 22:23 to 26:32, "Paul stands before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa" – with commentary

Acts 23: 23 - 35, "Paul Transferred to Caesarea," Acts 24: 1 – 27, "The Trial Before Felix;" Acts 25: 1 – 22, "The Consultation and Trial Before Festus;" Acts 25: 23 – 26: 32, "Paul before Agrippa."

The purpose of the Book of Acts is to record the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Vision and Ministry of Peter and Paul. **Today's study is the 19th of 20 lessons.**

A contextual statement:

Interestingly, *The Interpreter's Bible* makes the following observation. In the book of Acts, "The Lord is not returned, but in the meantime the word of God is being carried on by the church. The Gentile mission is itself the eschatological action of God." (*The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1971. p. 730.)

This I want to affirm as our perspective. **We will study this book from the perspective of the in-breaking of the Holy Spirit.** This puts us on the cusp of a deep and foreboding spiritual hole that is eternally deep. The Holy Spirit is that intuited presence within us that urges us to "Jump." "Jump!" To take this leap of faith means to surrender ourselves to the eternal deeps. The discovery, to which I can personally testify, is that this deep, dark, mysterious hole is the place where God lives within us. As we lose control of everything— our-selves, our relationships to neighbor and to God— then we can discover that God really does sustain us. But the experience is like falling, and it is not entirely comfortable. But it works.

According to our Study Chart we are studying "Paul's Ministry while in Jerusalem" (12:17 to 26: 32). We will review this section in three studies. This is the second of three lessons.

Read the assignment in one reading.

I. Acts 23:23-35 Paul transferred to Caesarea

1. What was the distance from Jerusalem to Antipatris, (35 miles) and from Antipatris to Caesarea (30 miles)?

REX: The distance is 35 miles. He left at 9 o'clock and made it to Antipatris the next day.

IHOPer response—This represents a very hard day's push for foot soldiers.

How is this important?

WS: The importance, or significance is that at Antipatris the foot soldiers were no longer needed as they were in gentile territory and safe from the Jews. The cavalry could now escort Paul on to Caesarea.

II. Acts 24:1-9 Trial before Felix

1. What were the charges brought against Paul?

REX: Paul was stirring up riots among the Jews. a) One of the main reasons Luke wrote his Gospel and the Book of Acts was to refute this charge. b) Paul was the ringleader of the Nazarene sect – Only place in the New Testament where Jesus' followers are called "Nazarenes." c) That he had tried to defame the Temple.

WS: Today, we would call them "terrorist" charges.

REX: How do such charges impact us today? A crafty and skilled lawyer can make even an innocent man look guilty. If we talk behind people's backs, or spread rumors, we are equally as guilty as the Jewish leaders.

2. Were the charges true? How do these charges relate to us today?

REX: Felix had been around for a long time and was in a position to judge for himself the various Jewish traditions.

WS: The charges were trumped up. The indifference of Felix may be due to the confusion of the charges. From his perspective they were religious charges dressed up in political cloths.

III. Acts 24:10-21 Paul's defense

1. Vs 10- Why was Paul cheerful or happy to make his defense to Felix?

REX: 1) Felix had been governor of Judea (southern province of Israel for several years and knew a good deal about Jewish customs. 2) Paul answered each of the charges clearly and challenged the accusers to prove any specific charges against him. Paul also said he worshiped the One True God, and he followed the true Way (that is Christ). He agreed with everything written in the Law and the Prophets (Old Testament). He was a true Jew, just as Christ himself was a true Jew.

2. Vs 14-25--What did Paul proclaim to Felix that he (Paul) had done? How did this differ from the Jewish leaders?

REX: The Jewish leaders didn't believe in the resurrection.

IV. Acts 24:22-27 Paul and Felix

1. Vs 25- How are we like Felix?

REX: We sometimes hear what God is telling us what to do, but we say we will do it later.

WS: This is the "don't call me, I'll call you" syndrome.

V. Acts 25:1-12 The trial before Festus

1. Why do you think Festus was happy to send Paul to Rome, and why did Paul want to go there?

REX: Festus wanted to do the Jews a favor and Paul wanted to go to Rome to proclaim the Gospel there.

WS: The whole process was being "sent upstairs."

II. Acts 25:13-27 Festus consults King Agrippa

1. Why did Festus consult King Agrippa?

REX: He needed to send written charges against Paul to the Emperor and he didn't know what to charge him with.

WS: Festus was looking for a form of blessed assurance that he was doing the right thing.

1. Vs 7-8--What does Paul say the twelve tribes of Israel hoped for?

REX: Paul says that the resurrection of the dead, together with eternal life, is the main hope of the Jewish nation.

2. Vs 14-What is a "goad"? How did Jesus use it in reference to Paul?

REX: A "goad" was a stick or a prod to prick with which to beat animals. Jesus is speaking in a

parable, according to which the “goad” is Paul’s conscience. Paul was like an ox pulling a plow, who kicks his feet when the farmer hits it with the goad. Paul had been “kicking his feet” against Christ in vain.

3. Vs 16-18--How do these verses pertain to us?

REX: We also need to move from darkness to light, and go and preach the gospel.

4. Vs 24- Why did Festus think Paul was "out of his mind"?

REX: Festus couldn’t understand why an educated man like Paul would give up his freedom and even his life for the sake of a dead man called Jesus.

WS: Always, it is difficult for a secular, or worldly, person to understand the freedom that comes from living out of the spiritual perspective. The axiom is, “When we give up everything we have everything we need.”

WS: MY QUESTION ADDED: Reflect on how the entire book of Acts could be used as a legal Brief written by Paul to present as his defense in Rome.

Alright folks, talk to me!