

**IS FESTUS, JUST ANOTHER FELIX?**  
**ACTS CH25:1-12**

**FESTUS, THE NEW JUDGE! V1-5**

“According to Josephus, Felix was recalled to Rome in order to explain his savage suppression of a dispute between Jews and Syrians over their respective civil rights in Caesarea, and would have been severely punished but for his brother Pallas' appeal to Nero. Not much is known about Porcius Festus, who replaced him, for he died in office only two years later. But he seems to have been more just and moderate than either his predecessor or his successors“ (Cited in John Stott, Commentary on Acts, pg 365).

In a “Blog” dated May 27<sup>th</sup> – 2015, by Dr Ruth Fox, focusing on the first 100 days in Parliament, highlighted the following headings to help new Parliamentarians to adjust to being an M.P.:

1. *Congratulations!*
2. *Time management: just say ‘no’!*
3. *Tackle the communication/information overload*
4. *Don’t rush the appointment of your staff*
5. *Get to grips with procedure*
6. *Get some rest and look after your health*
7. *A friend may no longer just be a friend!*
8. *Don’t expect much thanks*
9. *You may not enjoy your first three months but you won’t be alone*

V1 - The new Governor/procurator arrives and within 3 days goes to Jerusalem to meet with the Jewish leaders, which included the Chief Priest and Elders! Felix had left a legacy of distrust and disharmony and Festus was really keen to make a start in restoring goodwill, partnership, and working well with the leaders of the conquered state!

The request made by the Jews, implies that they had considered the outcome of the case, and had reached a conclusion that the probability of them winning, was deemed highly unlikely! So, they had to take matters into their own hands, and so plotted to kill Paul.

Festus is initially seen as energetic, taking the initiative and being bold V4!

**FESTUS, SITTING AS THE NEW JUDGE! V6-8**

Festus had spent around a week or so, meeting with the Jewish leaders, no doubt trying to restore some kind of confidence in Roman Justice, in light of Felix's cruel actions! Initially, Luke presents Festus, as energetic, busy and engaging. However, things are about to change and yet stay the same!

V7 – We are not told what the “serious charges” are by Luke but they obviously refer to Paul's response!

V8 – Paul again defends his position, this time on the 4<sup>th</sup> occasion:

1. Ch22:1
2. Ch23:6
3. Ch24:10

And again makes it clear that he has not committed any offence, in relation to the Law of the Jews, the Temple or Caesar!

### **FESTUS, THE NEW JUDGE, SOUNDING LIKE THE OLD JUDGE! V9-12**

**The word favour (an act of kindness, to win approval) occurs in Ch24:27, Ch25:3 and here in Ch25:9!** Felix had already tried to use Paul as political pawn (Ch23:27), now Festus, is thinking in a very similar way, trying to win ground with the Jews (Ch25:9).

***Festus emerges as a figure like Felix, who is compromised as an administrator of Roman Justice because of his concern to grant a favour to the Jews, Paul's accusers!***

V10 - 11 – Paul realises that Festus, is compromised as a Governor and that he would not be safe going back to Jerusalem, as a Roman Citizen, Paul had the right to appeal to Caesar, removing the matter from the Governor and placing it before the Emperor!

“Theologically, the theme that is implicit in this chapter is the gracious providence of God, fulfilling his purpose for Paul by protecting him from injustice and making it possible for him to be transported to Rome. Paul may appear to be the passive pawn of characters and events outside his control. However, as in the book of Esther, God is the hidden actor who influences all the events on the stage of history, as human beings play their part in the drama that unfolds. Indeed, if the glorified Lord Jesus is the Lord who assures Paul of his destiny Ch23:11, we may say that the one who called Paul to his service in the first place continues to provide opportunities for his name to be proclaimed to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel Ch9:15. Paul can be so bold within his setting because of his confidence in God's promises and ability” (Cited in David. G. Peterson, The Acts of The Apostles, pg 645).

### **APPLICATION**

How do you see the providence of God (**God's caring provision for his people as he guides them in their journey of faith through life, accomplishing his purpose in them**) in these verses?

- Ch23:11
- Ch23:16
- Ch23:23
- Ch24:27
- Ch25:4
- Ch25:11
- Ch25:12