

Acts 25:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

Analysis

And because I doubted of such manner of questions—Festus's candid admission: ἀπορούμενος (aporoumenos, 'being at a loss, perplexed') about τὴν περὶ τούτων ζήτησιν (tēn peri toutōn zētēsin, 'the inquiry concerning these things'). He's honest about his incompetence to judge Jewish theological disputes. This wasn't Roman jurisdiction—theology wasn't a legal category unless it threatened public order.

I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters—Festus's proposal (ἔλεγον εἰ βούλοιτο πορεύεσθαι, elegon ei bouloito poreuesthai, 'I was asking if he might wish to go') seems reasonable but was actually dangerous. Paul knew the ambush plot (23:12-15) and that the Sanhedrin couldn't give him a fair trial. Festus's suggestion, though presented as accommodation to Paul, was politically motivated—passing a difficult case to Jewish authorities. This sets up Paul's appeal to Caesar in verse 11, which would finally bring him to Rome as God intended (23:11).

Historical Context

Roman officials could refer cases involving Jewish law to the Sanhedrin, especially under a new governor unsure of local dynamics. Festus had been in office only days when the Jewish leaders pressed Paul's case. His offer to try Paul in Jerusalem was politically astute—it would curry favor with Jewish leadership—but

legally questionable since Paul was a Roman citizen in Roman custody. The proposal reveals Festus's political calculation over strict justice. Paul's appeal to Caesar was his legal right as a citizen and would remove the case from Festus's jurisdiction entirely.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Festus's honest perplexity about theological matters illustrate the necessity of the Holy Spirit to understand spiritual truth?
2. What does Paul's refusal to accept trial in Jerusalem teach about wisdom in recognizing danger disguised as accommodation?
3. In what situations should Christians refuse seemingly reasonable compromises that actually endanger gospel faithfulness or personal safety?

Interlinear Text

ἀπορούμενος	δὲ	ἐγὼ	εἰς	τὴν	περὶ	τούτου	ζήτησιν
doubted	And	because I	of	G3588	manner	such	of questions
G639	G1161	G1473	G1519		G4012	G5127	G2214
ἔλεγον	εἰ	βούλοιτο	πορεύεσθαι	εἰς	Ἰερουσαλήμ		
I asked	him whether	he would	go	of	Jerusalem		
G3004	G1487	G1014	G4198	G1519	G2419		
κάκεῖ	κρίνεσθαι	περὶ	τούτων				
and there	be judged	manner	these matters				
G2546	G2919	G4012	G5130				

Additional Cross-References

Acts 25:9 (Judgment): But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

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