

The  
**ACTS**  
of the Apostles



Believers have  
the opportunity  
to display the Gospel

Acts 24-25

---

# Introduction

---

- These chapters record multiple opportunities where Paul is given to defend himself against the Jews' unfounded accusations.
- Each time they press forward with more undeserved charges, Paul stays committed to speaking in a forthright manner.
- He proclaims his innocence with truth and obeying God's mission to share the Gospel, even when his life is on the line.

Christians should live  
in obedience to God  
and not fear others

Acts 24:1-27

---

# Paul Before Felix

---

- Paul's trial before the Roman governor begins with the Jews voicing their weak accusations.
- Paul was never the source of a riot. The crowds around him chose to revolt against his teaching, incited by some of the Jews who followed him from Asia.
- The claim of profaning the temple is unfounded because his accusers had surrounded Paul in the temple while he was adhering to Jewish purification customs.

---

# Paul Before Felix

---

- Paul is allowed to give a defense against the false accusations, which he does with dignity and clarity.
- The narrative of Acts gives us a clear vantage point from which to view the inaccuracies of their report.
- Luke highlights how unfairly Paul is treated by those who should be upholding an honest testimony of witnesses (Exodus 20:1–7).

---

# Paul Before Felix

---

- Paul steadily recounts the events of the previous weeks with accuracy.
- Each statement can be validated by those in attendance, and it would take a blatant lie to say otherwise.
- Paul reaffirms his clear conscience before God (verse 16) and invites his accusers to give evidence against him, which their statements have failed to do (verse 20).

---

# Paul Before Felix

---

- In a burst of inspiration, Paul adds the concept of the Resurrection into the court proceedings, which, until that point, hadn't been the main point of contention.
- Since Paul knows what angers these men most is his preaching about Jesus, his current platform is an opportunity to bring this essential truth back to the public's attention.
- He thereby declares the Gospel before rulers and kings.

---

# Paul Kept in Custody

---

- Paul is calmly confident in the testimony he has offered, and the reader can confirm that his words match Luke's account; however, Felix ends the hearing early.
- While he does continue to provide the proper care for Paul according to legal customs, he is unwilling to dismiss the obviously unfounded accusations of the Jews because he selfishly cares about preserving his popularity.

---

# Paul Kept in Custody

---

- Felix and his wife later request a private audience with Paul, who speaks quite candidly about the Gospel.
- His teaching on matters of sin and repentance cause Felix to be concerned, which is the beginning of conviction.
- But Felix responds by pushing Paul away, rejecting any further attempts at Gospel conversation (verse 25).

---

# Paul Kept in Custody

---

- Luke records that Felix's interest in a bribe brings him back to Paul, hoping that continued time together will encourage Paul to buy his freedom.
- The account ends with Felix's leaving Paul in jail until the next governor succeeds him (verses 26–27).
- Notice that Felix is a man more easily swayed by the opinions and reactions of others than by the Gospel message of sin and salvation.

Believers should preach  
the Gospel when  
they are treated unfairly

Acts 25:1-27

---

# Paul Appeals to Caesar

---

- Felix is succeeded by a new governor, Festus.
- In no time, the Jews return to refresh their two-year-old accusations against Paul, even suggesting that Festus allow them to carry out an act of vengeance (verses 1–3).
- Festus invites the Jews to participate in a more legal course of action and reopens the case against Paul (verses 4–6).

---

# Paul Appeals to Caesar

---

- Notice how Festus is very much like Felix.
- His desire to be in good standing with the Jewish population is stronger than his calling to uphold justice.
- Instead of dismissing the case for good, he asks Paul to continue defending himself in Jerusalem (verse 9).
- Paul says he is willing to submit to the law if found guilty and calls upon his right as a Roman citizen to be heard before the court of Caesar (verses 10–11).

---

# Paul Before Agrippa

---

- While Paul awaits transfer to Rome, King Agrippa and his wife pay Festus a visit (verse 13).
- The governor informs the king of all that has transpired over the past years (verses 14– 21).
- Most of his account is accurate, but he says nothing of his timidity to dismiss the Jews' case. Instead, he claims to have a sincere interest in the pursuit of justice by sending Paul back to Jerusalem for more questioning.

---

# Paul Before Agrippa

---

- We've seen by now that the entire case is a joke.
- Each politician has had a chance to act justly by deciding in Paul's favor, but has been swayed by his desire for self-preservation.
- This is confirmed further by Festus who claims to have arrived at a conclusion about Paul's innocence, but we then wonder why Festus has not set Paul free.

Ask Kerby

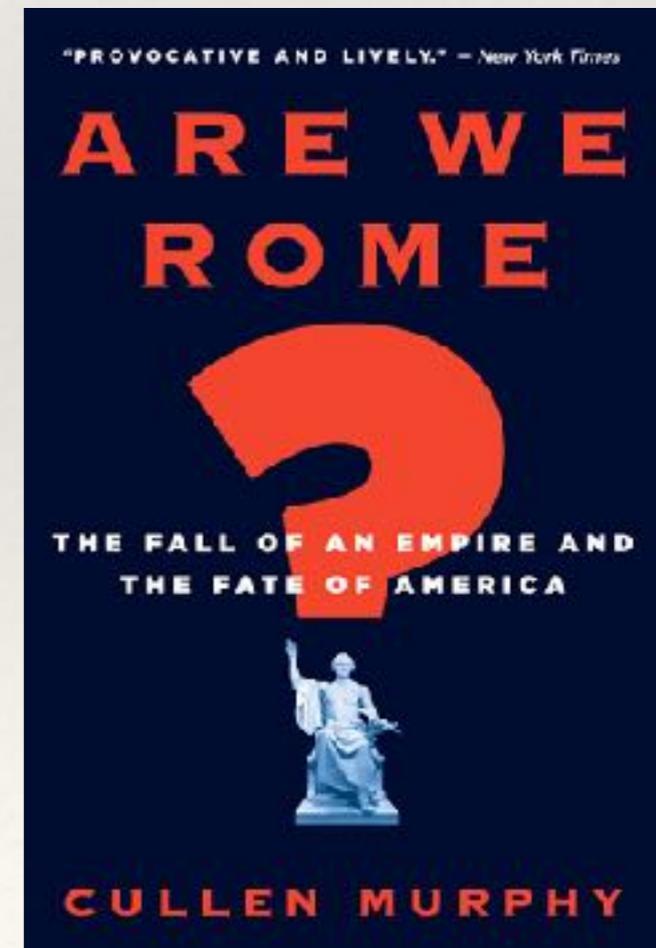
Are We Rome?

---

# Are We Rome?

---

- There are major similarities and differences between the Roman Empire and America.
- Size, political dominance, global influence.
- Differ in technology, government, slavery, democracy, entrepreneurship.
- Many parallels between the two.



---

# Similarities

---

- Dominant powers: “Rome and America are the most powerful actors in their world, by many orders of magnitude. Their power includes both military might and the ‘soft power’ of language, culture, commerce, technology, and ideas.”
- Approximately equal in size: “Rome and America are comparable in physical size—the Roman Empire and its Mediterranean lake would fit inside the three million square miles of the Lower Forty-eight states.”

---

# Similarities

---

- Global influence: “Both Rome and America created global structures—administrative, economic, military, cultural—that the rest of the world and their own citizens came to take for granted, as gravity and photosynthesis are taken for granted.”
- Open society: “Both are societies made up of many peoples—open to newcomers, willing to absorb the genes and lifestyles and gods of everyone else, and to grant citizenship to incoming tribes.”

---

# Similarities

---

- Culturally similar: “Romans and Americans can’t get enough of laws and lawyers and lawsuits. . . . They relish the ritual humiliation of public figures: Americans through comedy and satire, talk radio and Court TV; the Romans through vicious satire, to be sure, but also, during the republic, by means of the censorial nota, the public airing, name by name, of everything great men of the time should be ashamed of.”

---

# Differences

---

- Technological advancement: “Rome in all its long history never left the Iron Age, whereas America in its short history has already leapt through the Industrial Age to the Information Age and the Biotech Age.”
- Abundance: “Wealthy as it was, Rome lived close to the edge; many regions were one dry spell away from famine. America enjoys an economy of abundance, even surfeit; it must beware the diseases of overindulgence.”

---

# Differences

---

- Slavery: “Rome was always a slaveholding polity with the profound moral and social retardation that this implies; America started out as a slaveholding polity and decisively cast slavery aside.”
- Government: “Rome emerged out of a city-state and took centuries to let go of a city-state’s method of governance; America from early on began to administer itself as a continental power.”

---

# Differences

---

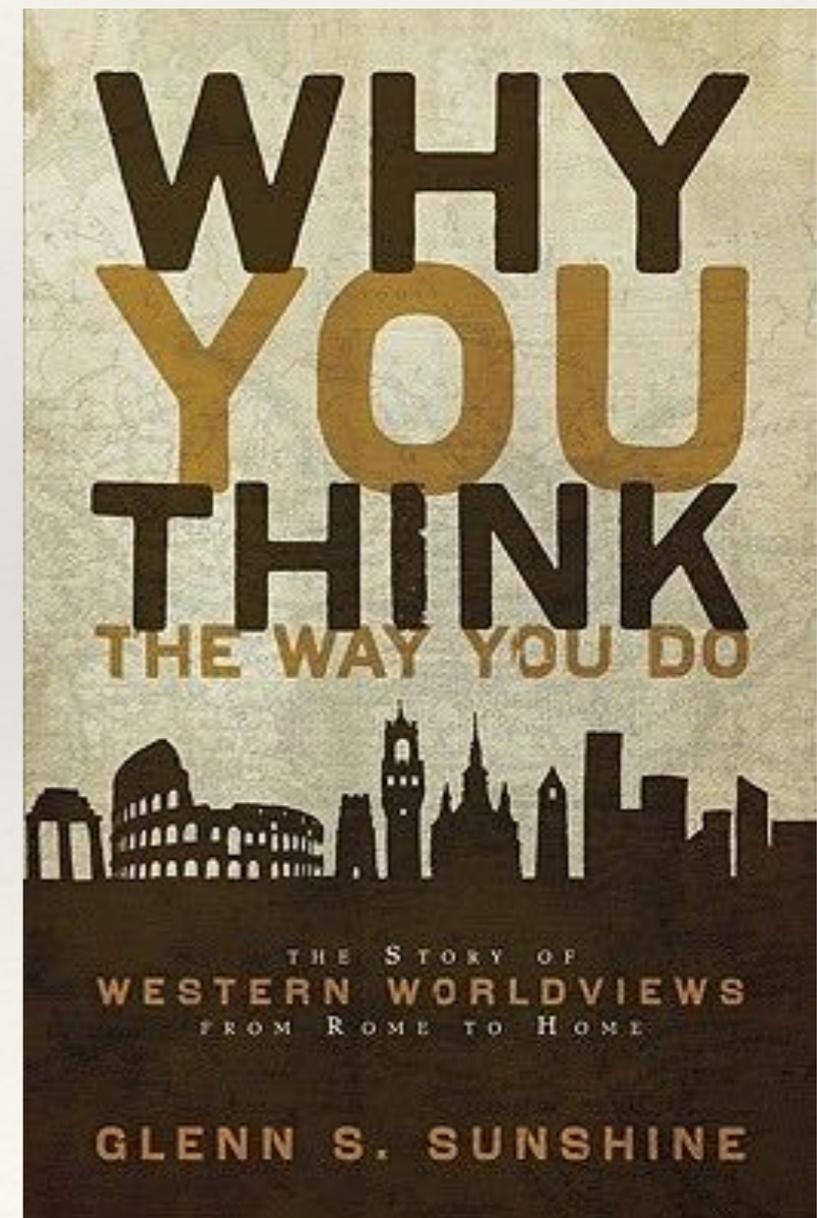
- Social classes: “Rome had no middle class as we understand the term, whereas for America the middle class is the core social fact.”
- Entrepreneurship: “Romans looked down upon entrepreneurship, which Americans hold in the highest esteem.”
- Economic dynamism: “Rome was economically static; America is economically transformative.”

---

# Worldviews Through History

---

- Professor Glenn Sunshine gave a lecture about Jonathan Edward's worldview at a conference.
- Chuck Colson invited him to teach with the Centurion's program.
- His talk about "How We Got Here" was turned into this book.



---

# Worldviews Through History

---

- He begins by discussing the worldview of Rome.
- By the end of the book we return to that same worldview.
- Western civilization is essentially a product of ancient Roman civilization plus Christianity.
- Glenn Sunshine argues that once you removed Christianity, modern society reverted back to Roman society and a recovery of the ancient pagan worldview.

---

# Worldviews Through History

---

- Like Rome we value toleration as the supreme virtue.
- The Romans lived in an oversexed society. So is our society.
- Rome practiced abortion. So does our society.
- Rome made a deliberate attempt to prevent pregnancy. In our modern world, birthrates in most of the western democracies are plummeting.

---

# Christian Influence

---

- As Christian ideas began to flow through Roman culture so much changed.
- One of the most important ideas was that human beings are created in the image of God. This idea has a profound impact. First, it meant that people are fundamentally equal to each other.
- He writes that, “Christians were the first people in history to oppose slavery systematically.”

---

# Christian Influence

---

- Christians (who believed that all are created in the image of God) treated the sick differently. They believed that even those who were deathly ill still deserved care.
- Dionysius of Alexandria reported that Christians (often at great risk to their own lives) “visited the sick fearlessly and ministered to them continually.”
- They would rescue babies abandoned in an act of infanticide. They would oppose abortion.

---

# Christian Influence

---

- In economics, we can also see the influence of Christianity. The idea that God created the universe and then rested showed that God worked. That would mean that human beings (made in the image of God) are expected to work as well.
- Contrast this with the Roman world where physical work was seen as something that only slaves would do. Christians saw labor as something that was intrinsically valuable.

---

# Christian Influence

---

- Labor is good; drudgery is bad. Drudgery is a result of the Fall (Genesis 3).
- Christians were the first to develop technology to remove drudgery from work.
- Other civilizations had technology, but the West uniquely applied such things as water power to make work more valuable and worthwhile by eliminating the drudgery and repetitive nature of certain tasks.

---

# Worldview Today

---

- Glenn Sunshine argues that once you removed Christianity from modern society, it has reverted back to Roman society and an ancient pagan worldview.
- So how should Christians live in this world?
- We should live out a biblical worldview. Every generation is called to live faithfully to the gospel, and our generation is no exception.

---

# Worldview Today

---

- We face a challenge similar to the early church, though not as daunting.
- The early church lived faithfully and transformed the Roman world. Christians produced a totally new civilization: western culture.
- We will increase our credibility and earn the respect from those who are around us by living according to those same biblical principles.

---

# Resources

---

