

Acts Chapter 25

4. Before Festus, 25:1-22

a. The plot of the Jews, 25:1-5

Acts 25:1 Festus then, having arrived in the province, three days later went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea.

Festus was made governor in A.D. 60 and died two years later. This gives us a good date for when this takes place

three days later went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea.

That is, he arrived in Jerusalem on the third day. This is similar to the resurrection of Jesus, after three days or on the third day.

Acts 25:2 And the chief priests and the leading men of the Jews brought charges against Paul, and they were urging him,

The hatred of the Jews had not ceased in this two-year time span. Paul would still be converting souls while in prison and so his presence would still be felt.

and they were urging him,

Acts 25:3 requesting a concession against Paul, that he might have him brought to Jerusalem (at the same time, setting an ambush to kill him on the way).

The Jews were back to their old tricks. They wanted to kill Paul. This reminds us of the plot made two years earlier, Acts 23:12

Acts 25:4 Festus then answered that Paul was being kept in custody at Caesarea and that he himself was about to leave shortly.

*Acts 25:5 "Therefore," he *said, "let the influential men among you go there with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them prosecute him."*

Festus shows the strong character he had over Felix. He would not let the Jews sway the judicial system. He tells them to bring the Sanhedrin court and meet him in Caesarea where they will have a chance to prosecute him.

b. The Appeal to Caesar, 25:5-12

Acts 25:6 After he had spent not more than eight or ten days among them, he went down to Caesarea, and on the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought.

Acts 25:7 After Paul arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges against him which they could not prove,

The Jews are good about pointing the finger yet they never have proof for their accusations.

Acts 25:8 while Paul said in his own defense, "I have committed no offense either against the Law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar."

We do not have the discourse of the Jews, but Paul seems to answer the charges they brought against him. Apparently these charges were three-fold.

1. Crimes against the Law of the Jews
2. Crime against the temple
3. Crime against Caesar – (This is Nero, became a very cruel leader)

These are similar to the charges first brought against him before Felix, 24:5-6

Acts 25:9 But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me on these charges?"

Festus shows that Paul had done nothing wrong against the Roman government. If he had Festus would not be sending him before the Sanhedrin. Any trial would be for things done against the Jewish law.

Acts 25:10 But Paul said, "I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you also very well know.

As a Roman citizen, if he had done anything wrong, he should be tried before Caesar's tribunal. Paul also understood that if he went to Jerusalem he would not live long, so he stood his ground and appealed to Caesar.

Acts 25:11 "If, then, I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die; but if none of those things is true of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar."

Here Paul clarifies why he does not wish to go before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. He was willing to die for wrong-doing, if in fact he had done anything wrong. But, he would not allow himself to be tried by those who have lied about what he did.

I appeal to Caesar

Paul took the final step in securing that he would receive a fair trial.

Acts 25:12 Then when Festus had conferred with his council, he answered, "You have appealed to Caesar, to Caesar you shall go."

Festus either had to let Paul go, or grant his request to appear before Caesar.

c. Paul's case presented to Agrippa, 25:13-22

Acts 25:13 Now when several days had elapsed, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea and paid their respects to Festus.

This is Herod Agrippa II, son of Herod Agrippa I, (12:1; 21-23) and great grandson of Herod the Great (Matt. 2:1). He ruled under the emperor over the provinces of the Sea of Galilee.

and Bernice

Bernice is his sister and was in an illicit relationship with him. She had once been married to her uncle, Herod King of Chalcis

arrived at Caesarea, and paid their respects to Festus.

They would be paying their respects because of the new position he had just taken over.

Acts 25:14 While they were spending many days there, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, "There is a man who was left as a prisoner by Felix;

Acts 25:15 and when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews brought charges against him, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him.

The Sanhedrin wanted a guilty verdict against Paul without a real trial taking place. We know they wanted a guilty verdict by what is said in verse 16

Acts 25:16 "I answered them that it is not the custom of the Romans to hand over any man before the accused meets his accusers face to face and has an opportunity to make his defense against the charges.

Acts 25:17 "So after they had assembled here, I did not delay, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought before me.

Acts 25:18 "When the accusers stood up, they began bringing charges against him not of such crimes as I was expecting,

Here Festus is making the claim of Paul's innocence that he was afraid to make before the Sanhedrin

Acts 25:19 but they simply had some points of disagreement with him about their own religion and about a dead man, Jesus, whom Paul asserted to be alive.

Acts 25:20 "Being at a loss how to investigate such matters, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there stand trial on these matters.

Acts 25:21 "But when Paul appealed to be held in custody for the Emperor's decision, I ordered him to be kept in custody until I send him to Caesar."

*Acts 25:22 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I also would like to hear the man myself." "Tomorrow," he *said, "you shall hear him."*

It would be natural for Agrippa to want to hear Paul. Agrippa's family had a long time connection with what Paul was preaching about, the certain dead Jesus whom, Paul claimed to be alive.

It was Agrippa's great-grandfather who had slaughtered the innocent children in a vain attempt to kill the infant Lord, Matthew 3. It was his father who seized James and had him executed with the sword, and imprisoned Peter whom was delivered by an angel, Acts 12 This is the same man that the Lord slew at Caesarea in A.D. 44, Acts 12:20-23 It was an uncle who had John the Baptist murdered, Matthew 14

Acts 25:23 So, on the next day when Agrippa came together with Bernice amid great pomp, and entered the auditorium accompanied by the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in.

5. Before Agrippa, 25:23-26:32

a. Festus introduces Paul, 25:23-27

*Acts 25:24 Festus *said, "King Agrippa, and all you gentlemen here present with us, you see this man about whom all the people of the Jews appealed to me, both at Jerusalem and here, loudly declaring that he ought not to live any longer.*

Acts 25:25 "But I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death; and since he himself appealed to the Emperor, I decided to send him.

Acts 25:26 "Yet I have nothing definite about him to write to my lord. Therefore I have brought him before you all and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the investigation has taken place, I may have something to write.

Acts 25:27 "For it seems absurd to me in sending a prisoner, not to indicate also the charges against him."