

Acts 25 Paul before Festus

Festus, then, after arriving in the province, went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea three days later. 2 And the chief priests and the leading men of the Jews brought charges against Paul, and they were pleading with Festus, 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).

4 Festus then answered that Paul was being kept in custody in Caesarea, and that he himself was about to leave shortly. 5 “Therefore,” he said, “have the influential men among you go there with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, have them bring charges against him.”

6 After Festus had spent no 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 that Paul be brought. 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,

8 while Paul said in his own defense, “I have not done anything wrong either against the Law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against Caesar.” 9 But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, replied to Paul and said, “Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me on these charges?” 10 But Paul said, “I am standing before Caesar’s tribunal, where I ought to be tried. I have done nothing wrong to the Jews, as you also very well know.

11 If, therefore, I am in the wrong and have committed something deserving death, I am not trying to avoid execution; but if there is nothing to the accusations which these men are bringing against me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar.” 12 Then when Festus had conferred with his council, he answered, “You have appealed to Caesar; to Caesar you shall go.”

13 Now when several days had passed, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived in Caesarea, paying their respects to Festus. 14 And while they were spending many days there, Festus presented Paul’s case to the king, saying, “There is a man who was left as a prisoner by Felix; 15 and when I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews brought charges against him, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him. 16 I replied to them that it is not the custom of the Romans to hand over any person before the accused meets his accusers face to face, and has an opportunity to make his defense against the charges.

17 So after they had assembled here, I did not delay, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered that the man be brought. 18 When the accusers stood up, they did not begin bringing any charges against him of crimes that I suspected, 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. 20 And being at a loss how to investigate such matters, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial there on these matters.

21 But when Paul appealed to be held in custody for the Emperor’s decision, I ordered that he be kept in custody until I send him to Caesar.” 22 Then Agrippa said

to Festus, "I also would like to hear the man myself." "Tomorrow," he *said, "you shall hear him."

Paul before Agrippa

23 So, on the next day when Agrippa and Bernice came 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 before them. 24 And Festus said, "King Agrippa, and all you gentlemen present with us, you see this man about whom all the people of the Jews appealed to me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer.

25 But I found that he had committed nothing deserving death; and since he himself appealed to the Emperor, I decided to send him. 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. 27 For it seems absurd to me in sending a prisoner, not to indicate the charges against him as well."

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

- What questions were provoked within you?
- Did anything confuse you?
- Did anything move you emotionally?
- Did God instruct you to do something?
- Did you gain any insight into God's character?

Paul's helpful insights

It was at Caesarea that Festus would sit to judge the accused.

The Jews had a plan to ambush Paul on the road to Jerusalem and kill him.

1. Was Festus a good man?
2. He had a need to be seen to look good in the eyes of others is that a good thing?
3. He wanted to please the Jewish leadership.
4. He failed to let Paul go, even though the charges against him could not be proved.
- He is a man pleaser.
5. Festus invites Paul's accusers to present their charges against Paul
6. Festus invites Paul to speak up for himself.
7. Paul declares 'I have done nothing wrong,
8. I have broken no laws, or spoken against the temple.
9. But If I am guilty for anything then let me die was that a bit fatalistic
10. Paul appeals to Caesar 'To Caesar says Festus 'you will go.'
11. King Agrippa and Bernice are keen to meet and talk with Paul.
12. They make a grand entrance of pomp and ceremony why do people do that?
13. Festus declares the Jews had signed a petition to bring Paul down but he says 'I have nothing to wright worthy of such an accusation
14. He invites Agrippa and the Jewish accusers to find something.
15. Festus declares that the Jews charges against Paul were not a breach of Roman law,
16. But about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claims is now alive.
17. Despite this Festus had no intention of letting Paul go why?
18. Festus explanation of events to King Agrippa conveys him to be an honourable

man.

19. Was that true?
20. Had Paul done anything wrong?
21. Is it right as Christians to defend our religious beliefs?
22. What do you think Paul is feeling towards the Jews community?
23. Is there any such thing as true justice?
24. Festus is willing; it seems, to give Paul the benefit of the doubt. What does it mean 'the benefit of the doubt'?
25. Why does it take ten days before Festus is willing to hear Paul's case?
26. If it was true the Jews couldn't prove all their allegations, why did Paul need to stand trial?
27. Paul defends himself on three accounts – he rejects a breach of Roman law, Temple law and Jewish law.
28. Have you ever had to defend yourself against a false allegation?
29. Why is Paul so unwilling to allow the Jews to make a judgement against him regarding the crimes committed?
30. What was Festus hoping for from King Agrippa and his wife when he tells Paul's story?
31. A sentence of condemnation is being put to death through stoning.
32. Roman law and customs were introducing certain values and legal principles that we still use today.
33. Festus was surprised about the allegations the Jews brought against Paul.
34. The truth was no law had been broken, only a debate about Jesus resurrection and who He was.
35. The Jews anger and hatred for Paul had become manic despite their being no evidence.
36. Is it absurd, as Festus suggests, to send Paul to Caesar to evaluate the crimes against him when no law had been broken?