

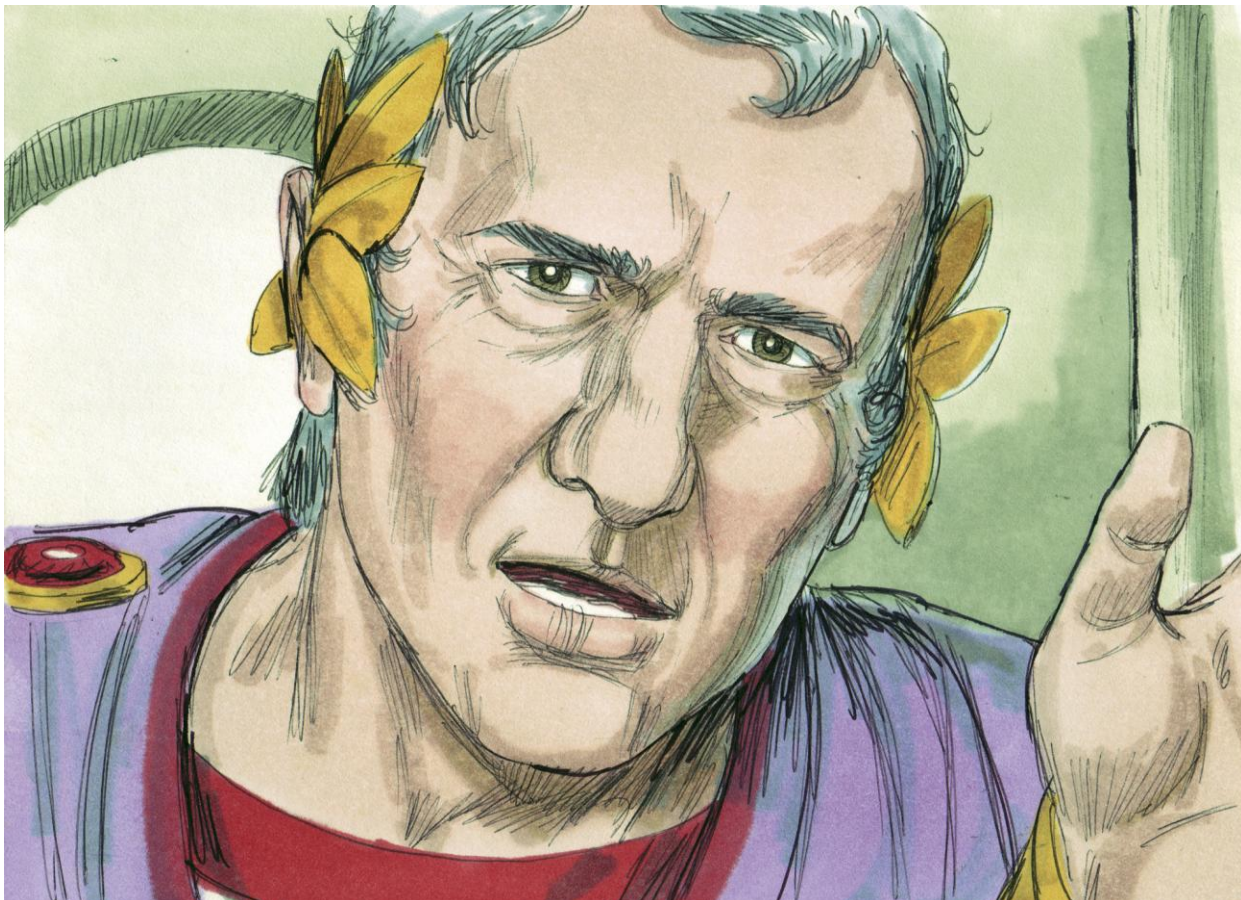
ACTS CHAPTER 25

Paul before Festus (Acts 25:1-22)

Festus, then, after arriving in the province, went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea three days later.

What type of governor was Festus? Sacred and secular history both show Festus in a much more favorable light than Felix. Both show him to have been basically reasonable and just, as well as active and energetic in the discharge of his duties as governor of Judaea, which position he held for only two years before his death. Having arrived at Ceasearea, he lost no time in becoming acquainted with those over whom he was to reign.

And the chief priests and the leading men of the Jews brought charges against Paul, and they were pleading with Festus, 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).

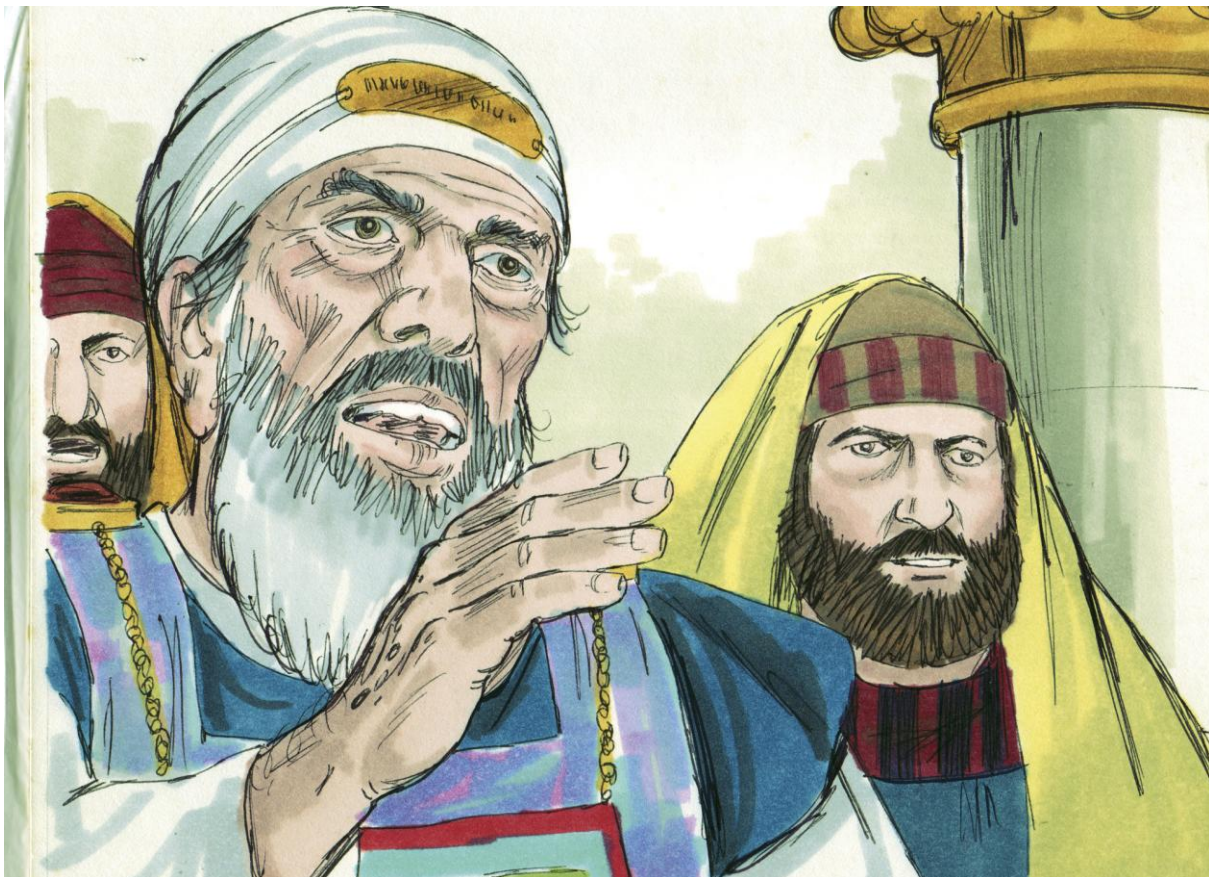


Can religion be corrupt and wicked? For sure. Two years had passed since these religious leaders had first invented their false charges against Paul, clamoring for his execution and even plotting to murder him. Now, after all this time, their hate is as bitter and relentless as ever and they are still as determined to destroy him, if not by false accusation and trial, then by the assassin's dagger.

Festus then answered that Paul was being kept in custody in Caesarea, and that he himself was about to leave shortly.

“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.”

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. 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.



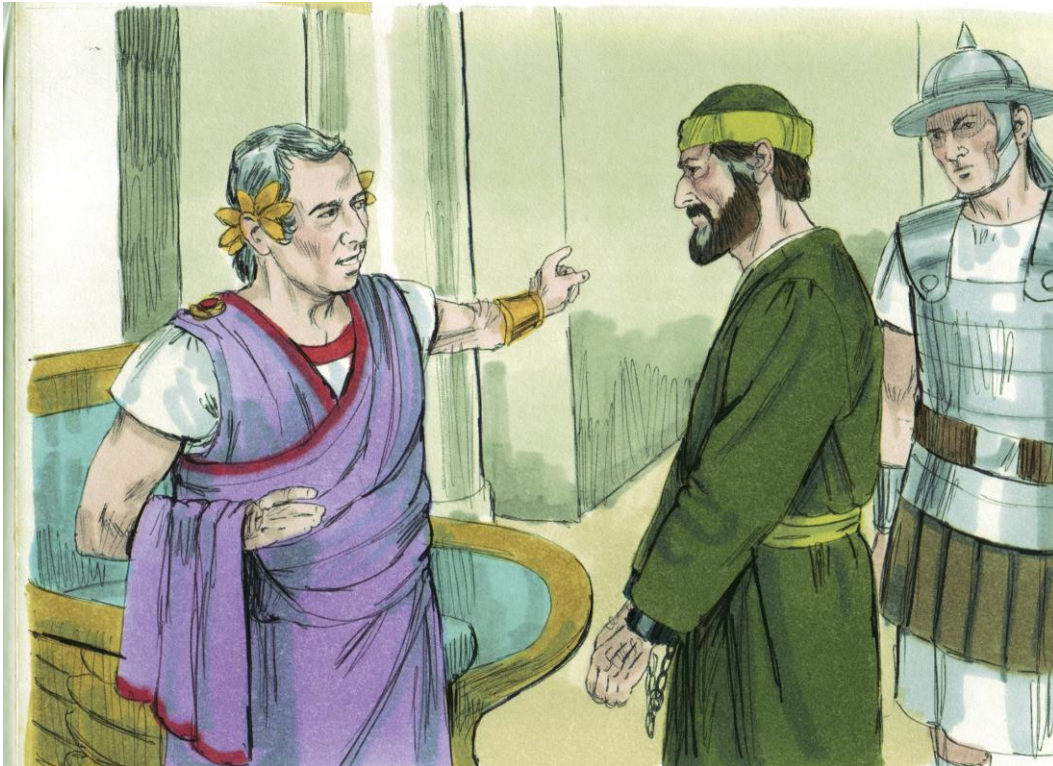


Paul said in his own defense, “I have not done anything wrong either against the Law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against Caesar.”

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?”

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. 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.”

Then when Festus had conferred with his council, he answered, “You have appealed to Caesar; to Caesar you shall go.”



Why could Paul appeal unto Caesar? There is historical testimony to the fact that certain, if not all, Roman citizens at that time had the right to suspend trials in which they were involved in the lower courts by appealing directly to the Emperor. Thus the apostle now, doubtless judging this was his only escape from sure death on the one hand, or another long imprisonment on the other, availed himself of this right. Perhaps he also remembered the promise of the Lord that he should testify at Rome and felt this was the course He would have him take.

Now when several days had passed, King Herod Agrippa II and Bernice arrived in Caesarea, paying their respects to Festus.

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; 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. 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."



“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. When the accusers stood up, they did not begin bringing any charges against him of crimes that I suspected, 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. 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. 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.”

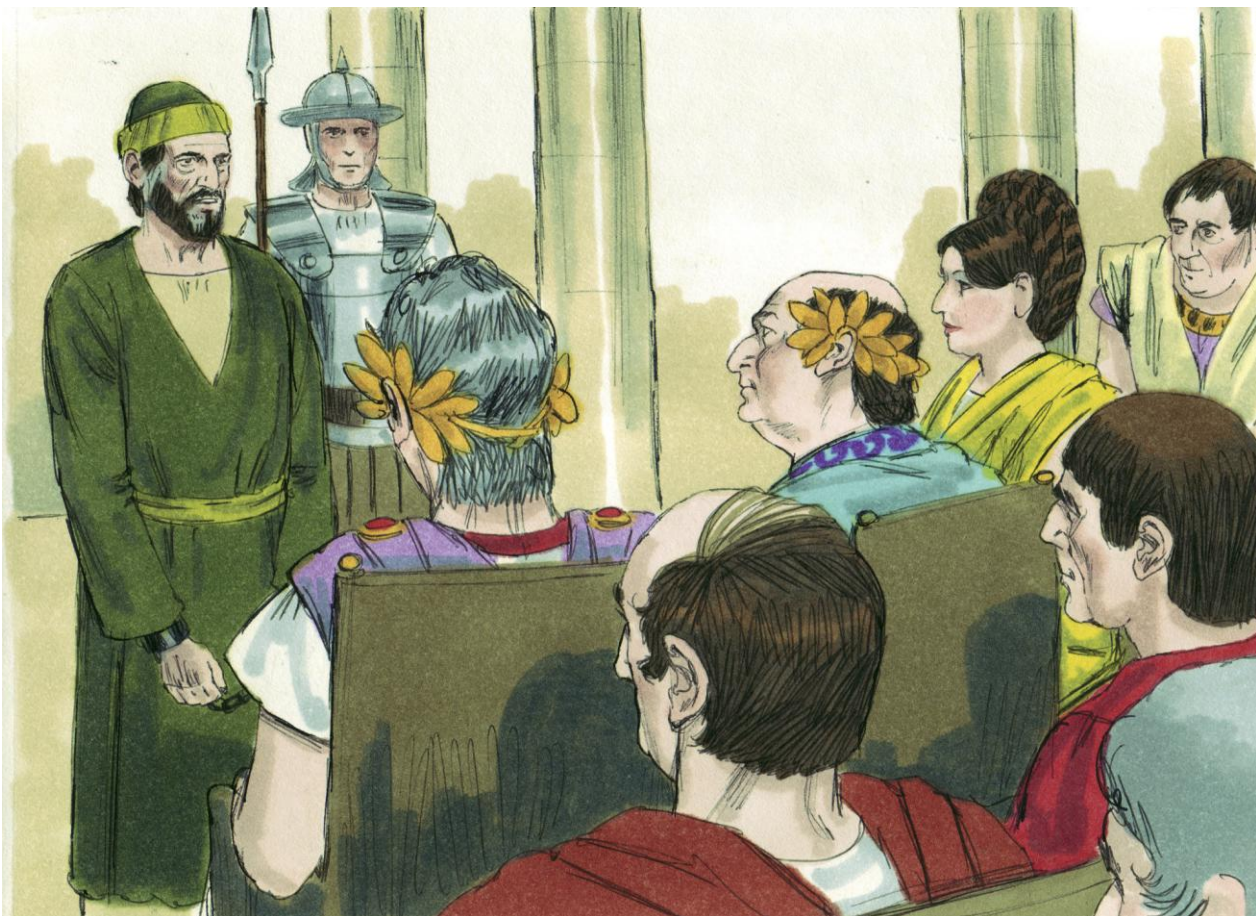
Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I also would like to hear the man myself.”

“Tomorrow,” he said, “you shall hear him.”

Why did King Herod Agrippa II give formal recognition to the new procurator? Agrippa represented at least some of the people of Israel, so it was advisable for him to maintain the best possible relations with the Roman procurator at Caesarea. Furthermore, Festus needed him too – especially now - for his knowledge of the Jewish religion and Jewish laws and customs. Again we have a wicked couple, King Herod Agrippa II and Bernice, before us. Herod, of course, came from wicked parents and had a dark, infamous past. Bernice, who is mentioned three times with him was none other than the sister of Drusilla, Felix' depraved paramour, and thus Herod's own sister, with whom he lived in incestuous relationship.

Paul before Agrippa (Acts 25:23-27)

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.



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



QUESTIONS OF ACTS CHAPTER 25

ALL ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND IN THE TEXT OF CHAPTER 25

1. When did Festus, after arriving in the province, went up to Jerusalem?

2. About what were the chief priests and the leading men of the Jews pleading with Festus against Paul?

3. How did Festus answer them?

4. How many days did Festus spend among them before he went down to Caesarea?

5. What did Paul say in his own defense against the serious charges of the Jews?

6. How do we know that Paul was not trying to avoid execution?

7. When did Festus present Paul's case to King Herod Agrippa II?

8. What was not a custom of the Romans?

9. What did Festus find out regarding the charges against Paul of the chief priests and the elders of the Jews?

10. What seemed absurd to Festus?

ACTS CHAPTER 25 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

Paul before Festus

1Festus, 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 [a]Festus, **3**requesting a [b]concession against [c]Paul, that he might [d]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 [e]go there with me, and if there is anything wrong [f]about the man, have them bring charges against him.”

6After *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 [g]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 [h]his council, he answered, “You have appealed to Caesar; to Caesar you shall go.”

13Now 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 [i]against him of crimes that I suspected, **19**but they *simply* had some points of disagreement with him about their own [j]religion and about a dead man, Jesus, whom Paul asserted to be alive. **20**And being at a loss how to investigate [k]such matters, I [l]asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial thereon these matters. **21**But when Paul appealed to be held in custody for [m]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

23So, on the next day when Agrippa and Bernice came amid great pomp and entered the auditorium,^[n]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 ^[o]the Emperor, I decided to send him. **26**^[p]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.”

Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE(r),

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