



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 25

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Introduction

Chapter Objectives:

- 1) To understand the circumstances in which St. Paul appealed to Caesar
- 2) To observe St. Paul before King Agrippa

St. Paul Appeals to Caesar (25:1-12)



The Jews Petitioned Festus to Return St. Paul to Jerusalem (1-5)

- Shortly after Festus arrived, he went to Jerusalem
- Festus is a ruler that we have little information about with the exception of what is said about him here in the bible
- After only three days in office there in Caesarea, Festus goes down to Jerusalem to find out more about the people he was to rule
- The high priest and chief men informed Festus of St. Paul
- They petitioned him, asking a favor, to bring St. Paul back to Jerusalem



St. Paul Appeals to Caesar (25:1-12)

- We see the difference in what is presented to Festus is that no orator like Tertullus was present, but just the high priest and the chief of the Jews
- to kill him—Little had changed in their hatred for St. Paul
- How deep must have been their hostility, when two years after the defeat of their former attempt, they thirst as keenly as ever for his blood
- Festus invited those Jews in authority to travel to Caesarea with him
- Festus showed wisdom

St. Paul Appeals to Caesar (25:1-12)



- God is working on getting St. Paul to Rome. It is "interesting" that Festus refused to give in to the Jews request and granted St. Paul a new trial
- It is simply another example of how God is working in the background "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases. (Proverbs 21:1)

St. Paul Appeals to Caesar (25:1-12)



St. Paul Stood before Festus in Caesarea (6-9)

- After remaining in Jerusalem about ten days, Festus returned to Caesarea
- He called St. Paul before the judgment seat the next day
- It is interesting to see the accuracy and literalness of prophecy coming true. Back in Acts Chapter 9, when St. Paul (then Saul), was blinded by the light, God spoke to Annias this prophecy:
“But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name (1)
before the Gentiles (2) and their kings and (3) before the people of Israel.”(Acts 9:15)

St. Paul Appeals to Caesar (25:1-12)



- The Jews laid serious complaints against St. Paul
- They could not prove them
- St. Paul answered, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all."
- If St. Paul deserved death, he would accept the punishment
- But if none of the things whereof they accused him were true, no man could deliver him unto them, with justice
- St. Paul is neither released nor condemned
- Festus asked St. Paul if he would go to Jerusalem with him

St. Paul Appeals to Caesar (25:1-12)



- St. Paul was a Roman, hence Festus could not, without his consent, send him up to the stronghold of his enemies
- He perhaps thought that St. Paul would appeal to his rights as a citizen, and that would prevent the necessity of a refusal to comply with the wishes of the Jews
- Festus at this point could have acquitted St. Paul (and should have)
- The complaints were all grievous and unfounded, and the right thing would have been to release St. Paul



St. Paul Appeals to Caesar (25:1-12)

St. Paul Appealed to Caesar and avoided a return to Jerusalem
(10-12)

- St. Paul stated that he stood at Caesar's judgment seat, "where I ought to be judged"
- To be delivered over to the Sanhedrin was to be sent to certain death
- Hence, St. Paul falls back on the right of every Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar himself, or to the imperial tribunal in Rome, a right granted by law to all Romans in the provinces, an essential for protection against unjust governors
- He said he had done no wrong to the Jews, "as you [Festus] very well know"

St. Paul Appeals to Caesar (25:1-12)



- St. Paul was willing to die, if he had committed anything worthy of death
- He had no guilt of the things the Jews accused him
- He was not going to be delivered to the Jews - he was a Roman citizen, and he then appealed to Caesar
- St. Paul, as a Roman citizen, exercised his rights which was the normal and the right thing for him to do
- Rome was where Jesus wanted St. Paul to go next - "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome" (Acts 23:11) - and this appeal would provide him an free voyage to Rome, complete with a Roman military escort



St. Paul Appeals to Caesar (25:1-12)

- Festus' own counselors, men called assessors, whose duty it was to advise the governor
- Festus stated, "You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!"
- Festus did not dare to deliver St. Paul to the Jews in violation of the Roman laws, and he was not willing to do justice to St. Paul, and thus make himself unpopular with the Jews
- He was, therefore, probably rejoiced at the opportunity of thus freeing himself from all the trouble in the case in a manner against which none could object

St. Paul Before Agrippa (25:13-27)



- Agrippa comes to Caesarea to meet the new Roman appointed Governor Festus
- His full name in history is King Herod Agrippa II, the grandson of Herod the Great
- When his father, Herod Agrippa I died, Agrippa II was 17 years old, still being educated in Rome and considered too weak to rule the perpetually rebellious Judea
- So a Roman governor was appointed over the province of Jews and Herod Agrippa II was later given the right to oversee the temple in Jerusalem and to appoint its high priest, as well as a small kingdom in modern Lebanon

St. Paul Before Agrippa (25:13-27)



- This is the family that killed the babies in Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth
- His grandfather had John the Baptist killed
- Herod's father had James the apostle (Apostle-John's brother) killed earlier in Acts
- His wife Bernice is the sister of Druscilla, the wife of Felix from Chapter 24
- Bernice is also a half-sister of Agrippa
- Therefore, Agrippa is having a martial relationship with his half sister

St. Paul Before Agrippa (25:13-27)



- In the Roman Government Agrippa was considered an expert in the Jewish religion and was politically consulted on this issue
- Most of the local Jews also knew that Rome looked to Agrippa as a consultant
- Therefore, St. Paul's opportunity to preach Jesus to Agrippa was a great opportunity
- If Agrippa was converted, it would lead a greater acceptance of Christianity in Jerusalem as well as Rome
- This was a major opportunity for St. Paul
- Remember that Festus is the "new governor" in town
- Agrippa, who is a ceremonial king with limited power, comes down to pay his respect

St. Paul Before Agrippa (25:13-27)



- Festus laid St. Paul's case before Agrippa
- He noted that Felix had left St. Paul a prisoner
- The chief priests and elders of the Jews informed Festus about St. Paul
- Festus told the Jews that it was not Roman custom to deliver the accused for "destruction" without the accused having the opportunity to answer the charges
- Upon Festus' return to Caesarea, he had St. Paul come before the judgment seat

St. Paul Before Agrippa (25:13-27)



- Festus discovered nothing wrong, other than there were some questions about "their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive"
- The insignificance of the whole affair in the eyes of Festus is manifest
- He asked St. Paul to go to Jerusalem, since he was "uncertain" about these matters
- Then St. Paul appealed to Caesar
- "Unto the hearing of Augustus." One of the titles of the Roman emperor. He was styled Caesar, Augustus, and Imperator, from whence the word emperor
- Agrippa requested to hear St. Paul himself
- Festus said to Agrippa, "Tomorrow you shall hear him"

St. Paul Before Agrippa (25:13-27)



St. Paul Stood Before Agrippa and Bernice (23-27)

- Here was a noble assembly brought together to hear the truths of the gospel, though they only meant to gratify their curiosity by attending to the defense of a prisoner
- Many, even now, attend at the places of hearing the word of God with great pomp, and too often with no better motive than curiosity
- St. Paul was brought before King Agrippa the next day, following much pomp, a display of great splendor and magnificence, upon the entry of Agrippa and Bernice

St. Paul Before Agrippa (25:13-27)



- Festus explained the situation to Agrippa and the men gathered
- Festus reported that the Jews claimed St. Paul was not "fit to live any longer"
- Festus stated he found that St. Paul had committed nothing deserving death
- He noted that St. Paul had appealed to Caesar, and he was going to send him
- Festus indicated that he had nothing to write to Caesar about St. Paul
- He hoped that after Agrippa's examination of St. Paul, he may have something to write, for he thought it unreasonable to send an appeal to Caesar without specifying the charges

St. Paul Before Agrippa (25:13-27)



- Festus was seeking an advice
- He was really perplexed
- He had just come into the province of Judea, and was not acquainted with Jewish customs
- He could see nothing wrong in St. Paul, but the Jewish rulers accused him so vehemently that he was not sure that he understood the case
- King Agrippa was a Jew by birth, would understand the real difference between St. Paul and the Sanhedrin, and could aid Festus to formulate the charges that must be sent to Rome when St. Paul was sent to appear before Caesar's tribunal

St. Paul Before Agrippa (25:13-27)



- This great speech was part of the "pomp and ceremony"
- The formal charges are announced out loud for everyone to hear
- This whole speech appears to be designed to build up the ego of Agrippa
- The other reason for this "formal announcement" was to try to please the local crowd
- Festus was trying to show how "fair" Rome is, in dealing with prisoners
- Rome was known for fair-justice
- This demonstration was also a public statement to the local Jewish leaders the evidence supporting their charges were not enough to warrant the death penalty



Conclusion

- Why did the Jews want St. Paul sent to Jerusalem?
- How did St. Paul reply when Festus asked him if he would go to Jerusalem and be judged?
- Why doesn't Festus let Paul go free?
- To whom did St. Paul appeal?
- Who came to Caesarea to salute Festus?
- Who were "King Agrippa and Bernice"?
- What do you think was the real reason for Festus bringing St. Paul before Agrippa and Bernice?
- What was Festus' dilemma in which he found himself? How was he hoping Agrippa could help? What did he find unreasonable?