

BIBLE STUDY.

Acts 25:1-26:32;

Paul Before Festus and Agrippa.

Paul escapes another plot.



Acts 25:1; “Now when Festus had come to the province, after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem.”

Felix is succeeded in the governorship of Judea by **Porcius Festus**.

The **former governor, Felix**, had treated the Jews harshly, causing a severe reaction among the Jews. As a result, **Felix** was removed from office and was replaced by **Festus**.

Notice how quickly **Festus** sought to appease and show his respect to the Jews.

Within three days after assuming the governorship.

He immediately travelled to Jerusalem. What happens with **Festus** from this point on, paints a picture of a various kind of man.

Acts 25:2; “Then the high priest and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they petitioned him.”

This probably refers to **the Sanhedrin**.

Previously, the Sanhedrin had **cooperated with the 40 zealots in their plot against Paul**. (23:12–15;)

Now, they themselves plotted against Paul.

Notice how **they wanted to take advantage of Festus**. They know that **he is new on the job**, and **right away they made a petition** concerning Paul.

How much time has passed already, since **Felix left office**? **Two whole years**, but these men **could not forget the issues** concerning **Paul**.



Acts 25:3; “asking a favour against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem while they lay in ambush along the road to kill him.”

When the heart of man is full of hatred,
they cannot forget things.

They wanted a **favour**. What favour was that?
**To bring Paul to Jerusalem so that they
could kill him.** That's the **ambush** that
these men are planning against God's servant.

These men are acting like the wife
of Herod, when she requested
the head of John the Baptist.

Festus has the opportunity
to listen to them and to become
famous among the Jewish men.

Will He?





Acts 25:4; “But Festus answered that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself was going there shortly.”

Apparently, **Festus** appeared to be a serious and responsible official when he said that **Paul would remain in Caesarea** and that shortly, he would go to him.

Festus is not in the position **to let these men** decide what the Roman Government has to do regarding a prisoner.

Many want Paul dead now, but they are seeing their hopes fade away.

All of these Roman governors knew that the **only thing these men wanted was to shed innocent Blood**, and, they didn't want to be partakers of that.



Caesarea.

View of the Sea from Roman Theatre.

Acts 25:5; "Therefore," he said, "let those who have authority among you go down with me and accuse this man, to see if there is any fault in him."

Here we go again with the same story as before. If someone has something against this man, **bring it to Caesarea** and there **we will discuss the matter.**

Ananias has been there.

Many accusers have been there.

Lysias has been there.

A man named **Tertullus** has been there.

Has no one told Festus about all of this?

They just will not stop accusing Paul.

22:30; 23:30; 24:2,8,13; 25:5,11,16,18; 26:2,7;

Acts 25:6; “And when he had remained among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day, sitting on the judgment seat, he commanded Paul to be brought.”

As the new governor, **Festus** stayed among them for a while, in order to straighten out all of the problems that **Felix had caused**.

After that, **Festus travelled back to Caesarea** and while **in Caesarea**, the **very next day**, **Paul** was brought before **Festus** so that they could meet for the first time.

Again, **Festus** as new governor, will be in front of **Paul**, and, **the accusers** will be there also. The **only difference** is that this time, **there is NO lawyer**.

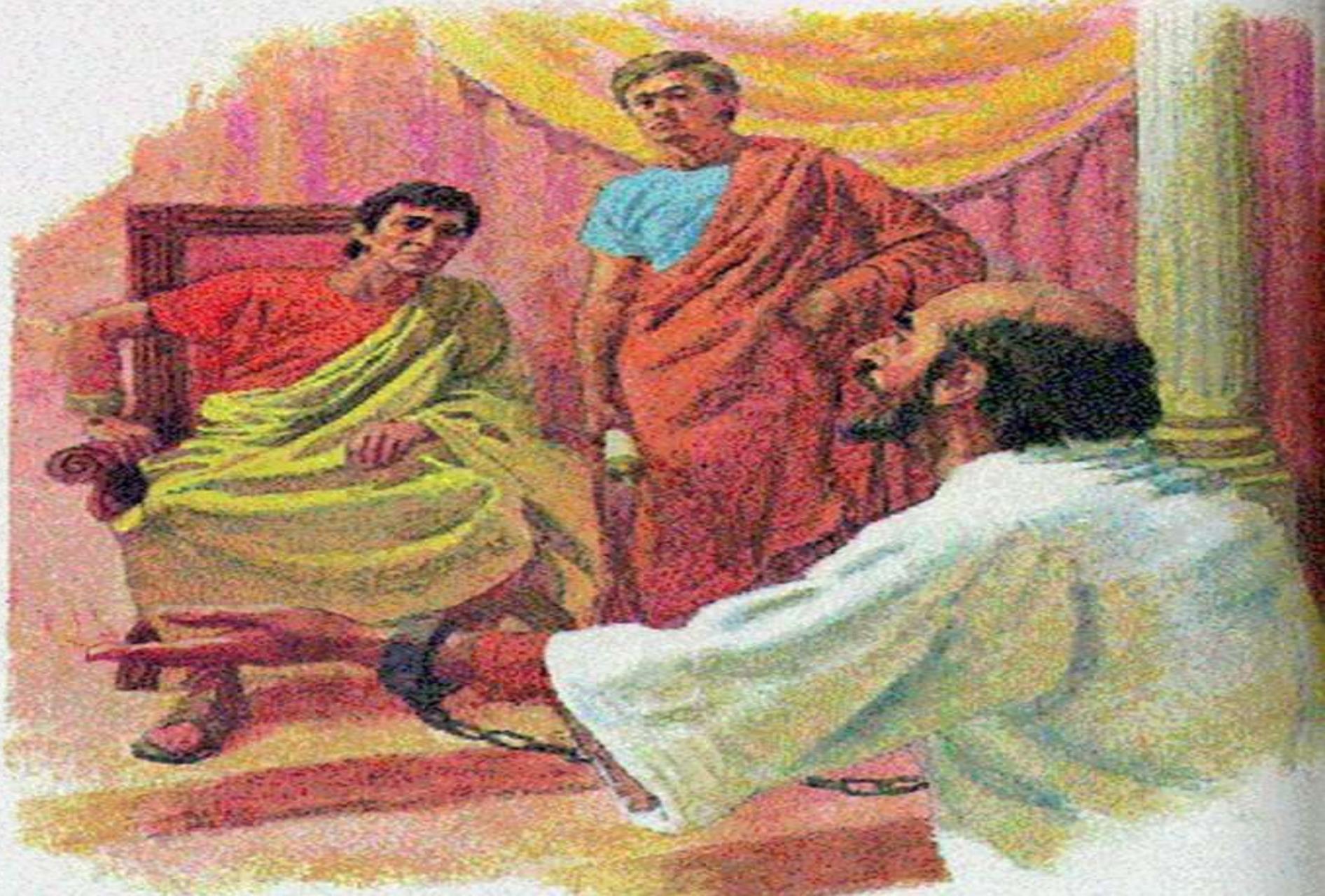
Acts 25:8; “When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.”

Accusing someone is easy,
proving those accusations is a different story.
Many have come to this place accusing Paul
of many things, but, according to Luke,
no one can prove any of the accusations.

Luke also mentioned that
these are serious accusations.

This time, **Luke** does not mention the accusations
they brought forth, but from previous ones,
we know that they complained about:
HERESY, SACRILEGY, AND SEDITION.

Acts 25:8; "while he answered for himself, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all."



Acts 25:8; “while he answered for himself, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all.”

What Paul is saying here is very close to what **Jesus said** in Luke 23:2; John 19:12;

Someone may ask **If Paul had miraculous Power,** why could he not perform a miracle right there and be freed?

Did Jesus have Power?

Mt 26:53; "Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?"

Why did Jesus not do it?

Love for you and me.

That is the **same reason** why **Paul** did not do it.

Acts 25:9; “But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favour, answered Paul and said, “Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things.”

Paul is refusing to go to Jerusalem,
for he knows what will happen there.
See? Festus is not an honest man either.

Festus knows about the plot and here, he is trying to **intimidate Paul** by saying: “Are you willing to go to Jerusalem and be judged there?”

The point is not that Paul was afraid, but rather, **Jesus had a plan for his servant** and he would not die in the city Jerusalem.

Festus has already started off **on the wrong foot.**

Acts 25:10; “So Paul said, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know.”

Christians have the right to defend themselves when they are accused in a unjustified manner.

This is the first time that Paul mentioned, that he is at Caesar's Judgement seat.

He knows his rights and right now, he is not in the position to please neither the Jews nor Festus.

That is the reason why Paul now mentions Caesar's name.

Paul admits doing no wrong to anyone, and he is not guilty of anything.

Right now, Festus is also aware of that.

“You very well know”. Paul knew that Festus knows.

Acts 25:11; “For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar.”

An Offender? “If I am.”

Committed anything? “I will die.”

But... If there is nothing wrong.

If the accusations have no basis.

**No one, not you, not Felix, not Lysias,
nor the Sanhedrin can deliver me to them.**

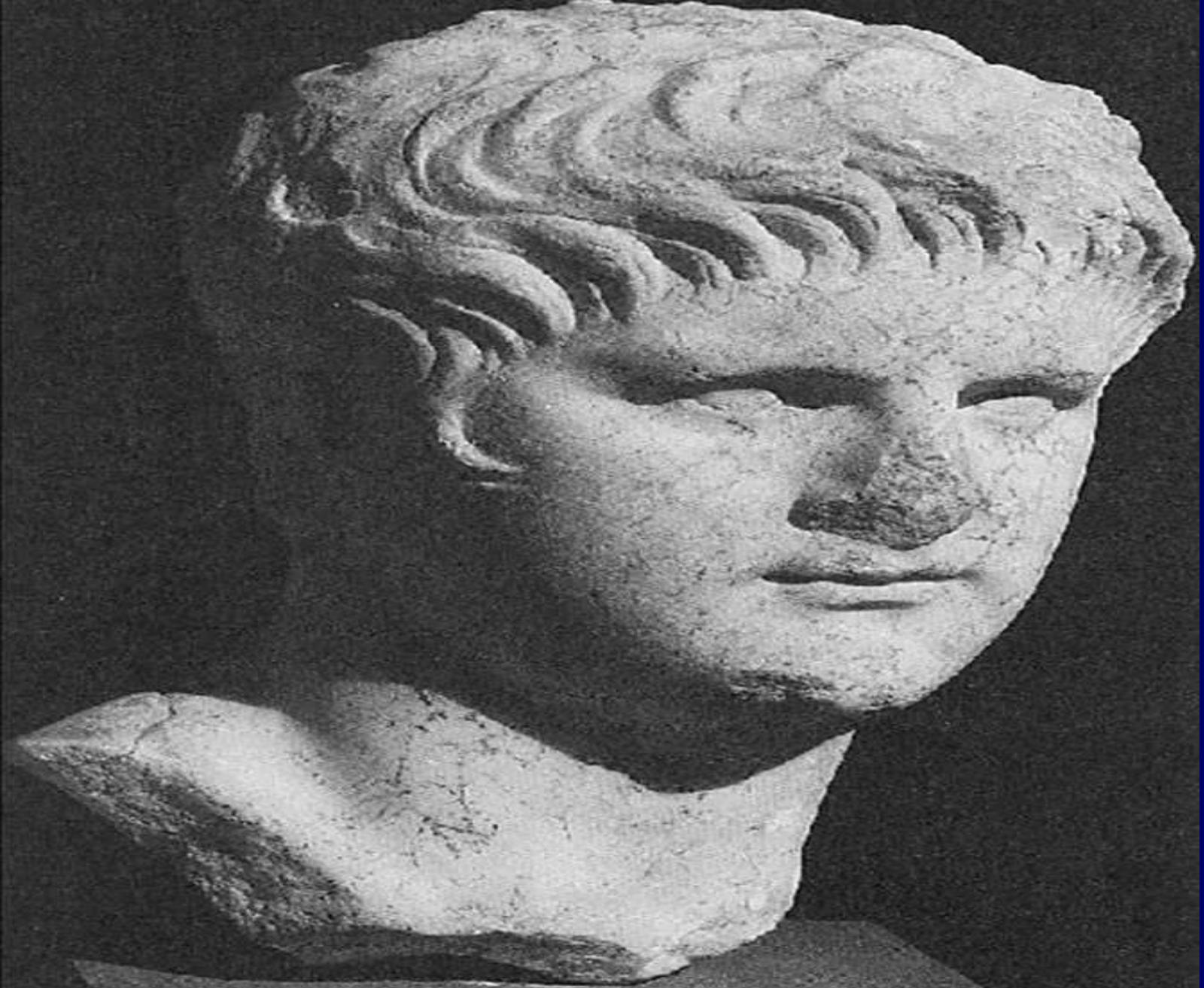
I am a Roman, no one can touch me.

I APPEAL TO CAESAR.

It has been more than 2 years and now,

Paul is tired of all of this mockery.

Acts 18:14; 23:29; 25:25;



Nero – Emperor 54-68 AD

Acts 25:11; “For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar.”

I appeal to Caesar! Nero had become the emperor by this time. It was the right of every Roman citizen when a local Roman court could not decide his guilt or innocence.

To have his case heard before Caesar himself (or his representative) in Rome.

This was the highest court of appeal, and winning such a case could have led to more than just Paul’s acquittal.

It could have resulted in official recognition of Christianity as distinct from Judaism.



Nero's Leaky Palace in Rome.

v 10-11 Paul Made These Points:

- 1. He was at Caesar's judgment seat where he should be judged.**
- 2. He had done no wrong to the Jews, as Festus knew.**
- 3. He was willing to die if he had done anything worthy of death.**
- 4. If he was not guilty of doing wrong to the Jews, no person could legitimately deliver him to them.**
- 5. He appealed to Caesar.**



Remains of Nero's Palace, Rome.

Acts 25:12; “Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered,
“You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!”

Festus is not willing to continue this trial.
He could not handle the case nor the man.

There is no guilt on **Paul's** behalf, and partly, that
is the reason why he says: I want to go to Caesar.
Is this Paul talking or is this a Bible prophecy?

Acts 9:15; “But the Lord said to him, Go, for he is
a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles,
kings, and the children of Israel. 16 “For I will show him
how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.”

Acts 19:21; 23:11;

Acts 25:13; “And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus.”

Marcus Julius Agrippa. This **Julius Agrippa** was the son of **Herod Agrippa I**, the man who **killed James** and **put the apostle Peter in prison**. Acts 12:1-3;



He is also the **Great grandson** of **Herod the Great**, the man who ordered the killing of all of the babies in the times of Jesus.

Acts 25:13; “And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus.”

So, what we see in this event is that this man comes from a very criminal lineage.

Luke presents this man with a woman: **Bernice**.

What is the relationship between them?

They are Brother and sister.

But, that’s not all.

They were living in INCEST!

Agrippa was also the **Brother of DRUSILLA**.

Acts 24:24;

This **Drusilla** was **the wife of Felix** so that makes **Herod** and **Felix**. Brother-in laws!

Agrippa and Bernice



Acts 25:13; “And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus.”

Bernice was a woman of very long and very doubtful conduct. Long after, when her relationship with her brother ended, **Bernice became the mistress of general Titus.**

When **Agrippa I died** (eaten by worms), **Agrippa II was 17 years old** and was living in Rome.

Agrippa II became the king in the year 52 A.D., **Agrippa II** was in power **when Titus** came and **destroyed the city of Jerusalem** in year 70 A.D.

Acts 25:13; “And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus.”

An incestuous relationship
was not unusual for the Herod's.

You might remember that one of the Herod's had John the Baptizer decapitated because John had rebuked him for living with his brother's wife. (Mark 6 and Luke 3).

Acts 25:13; “And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus.”

For background information about the attitudes and **problems of the Roman governor** of Palestine you can read the **letters of Pontius Pilate to his friend Seneca in Rome.**

Felix, Festus and **others** that preceded and followed them in this position must have made similar observations and had similar feelings.

The next picture shows **an inscription** found at Caesarea from his time that **calls Pontius Pilate the Prefect of Judea.**
His governorship was 26-36 AD.



Pontius Pilate Inscription – First Century.

Acts 25:14; “When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying: “There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix.”

When King Agrippa came down to welcome Festus to the province, **Festus told him about Paul.**

The subject had to come up; **Paul** was a very important topic, and they could not ignore the issue.

Festus is telling Agrippa:

“There is a **certain man** left a prisoner by **Felix,**”

Festus is probably looking to **King Agrippa** to shed some ‘**light**’ on the matter, regarding this prisoner.

Some scholars believe that maybe, **Festus was trying to convince Agrippa** that **Paul was a dangerous man.**

Acts 25:14-15; “When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying: "There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix. about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him.”

The case of **Paul** will now be in the hands of **King Agrippa**, who is only a visitor in this case. This proves **the inadequacy of Festus**, regarding this case.

It is no wonder that the man of God was obligated to appeal to Caesar.

First– The criminal elders from Israel.

Second– Lysias the commander.

Third- Felix the money lover.

Fourth- Festus the inadequate.

Fifth- Agrippa the son and grandson of true criminals.

Acts 25:16; “To them I answered, 'It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.’”

What Festus calls Roman custom

was actually **Roman law**. The Roman courts did not condemn a person without proof of his guilt.

Felix, Festus, and many others, understood that the purpose of all of the **Jewish leaders** was to lead **Paul into destruction**. They knew that very well.

This was the scenario in the case of Christ. Pilate knew that they (the whole crowd on that occasion), were not being honest and that they were demanding Jesus to be crucified over for the simple fact that they were **OFFENDED BY JESUS' TEACHINGS**.

The same thing is happening today with many **Christians** around the world. **They die for false, rather than real reasons.**

Acts 25:17-18; “Therefore when they had come together, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in. “When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed.”

When men pass the wrong judgment, then God will be the one judging them.

Festus is in a very delicate situation If he does not use **righteous judgement against Paul...**

This is the reason why he ask for advice from his **brother in law** and from his **sister Julia Bernice.**

They never heard the accusers bring **any valid points against Paul,** so, the question is:

Why continue a trial that is not based on truth but on pure speculation?

Acts 25:19; “but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.”

Festus is not giving the **death of Jesus** any importance or attention.

Very indifferently, he says:-

**“A certain Jesus, Who had died...
Whom Paul affirmed to be alive.”**

Paul was not only teaching the **resurrection of Jesus**, but was also **teaching** others that **Jesus was enthroned in heaven**.

Acts 2:36; Philippians 2:9-10;

This is what gives life to **every Christian** around the world; knowing that **Jesus is alive** and that **He is with us** in whatever circumstances we might be in.

Acts 25:20-21; “And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters.

“But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar.”

Paul was the one who requested to **go to Caesar.**

Who was the Caesar at this time?

AUGUSTUS or NERO?

Augustus is not a PROPER name,

It was a **title used** among **the Caesars**

to indicate **‘divinity’** among the roman people.

By this time in history they really believed that the Caesar was a divine being!

Acts 25:20-21; “And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters.

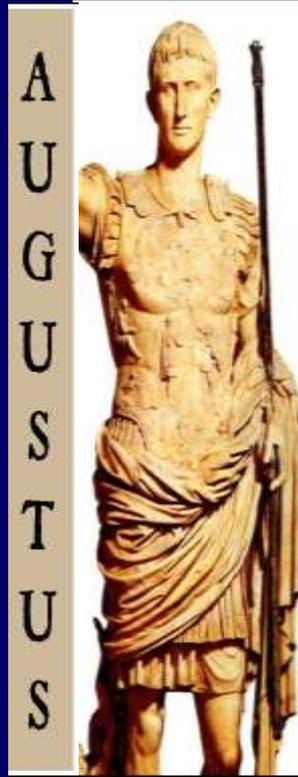
“But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar.”

The **real Caesar** of the time **was NERO.**

The **name Augustus properly denotes** that which is **venerable**, or worthy of **honour and reverence.**

It was first applied to **Caesar Octavianus**, who was the **Roman emperor** in the time when **Jesus** was born, and who is usually called **Augustus Caesar.**

But, **the title** continued to be used of his successors in office, as denoting the **veneration or reverence** which was **due to the rank of emperor.**



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

Agrippa knew a lot about the "way" Acts 26:26;

His **great grandfather** try to kill Jesus.

His uncle Killed John and **put Jesus on trial.**

His father Killed James.

Now, **Agrippa** showed real interest in **hearing Paul.**

"I also would like to hear the man myself."

Every time Paul has the opportunity to talk, **he only**

preaches the gospel of Christ to other people

and exhorts people to change their ways

And to look for God, the only real and true God!

A date has been set:- **TOMORROW.**

Acts 25:23; “So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in.”



Acts 25:23; “So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in.”

Humans have such short of memories.

Can you see the way that they are entering the auditorium? **Luke** says: “**with great pomp.**”

Doesn't Agrippa remember what happened to his father when he acted in this exact way?

Acts 12:21-23; “So on a set day **Herod**, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. 22 And the people kept shouting, “**The voice of a god and not of a man**”

23 “Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And **he was eaten by worms and died.**”

Acts 25:23; “So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in.”

The men are not arriving alone:
With **Herod**, there was:
His wife/ mistress /sister.

Many commanders
are also coming.

Many **prominent men** of the city.

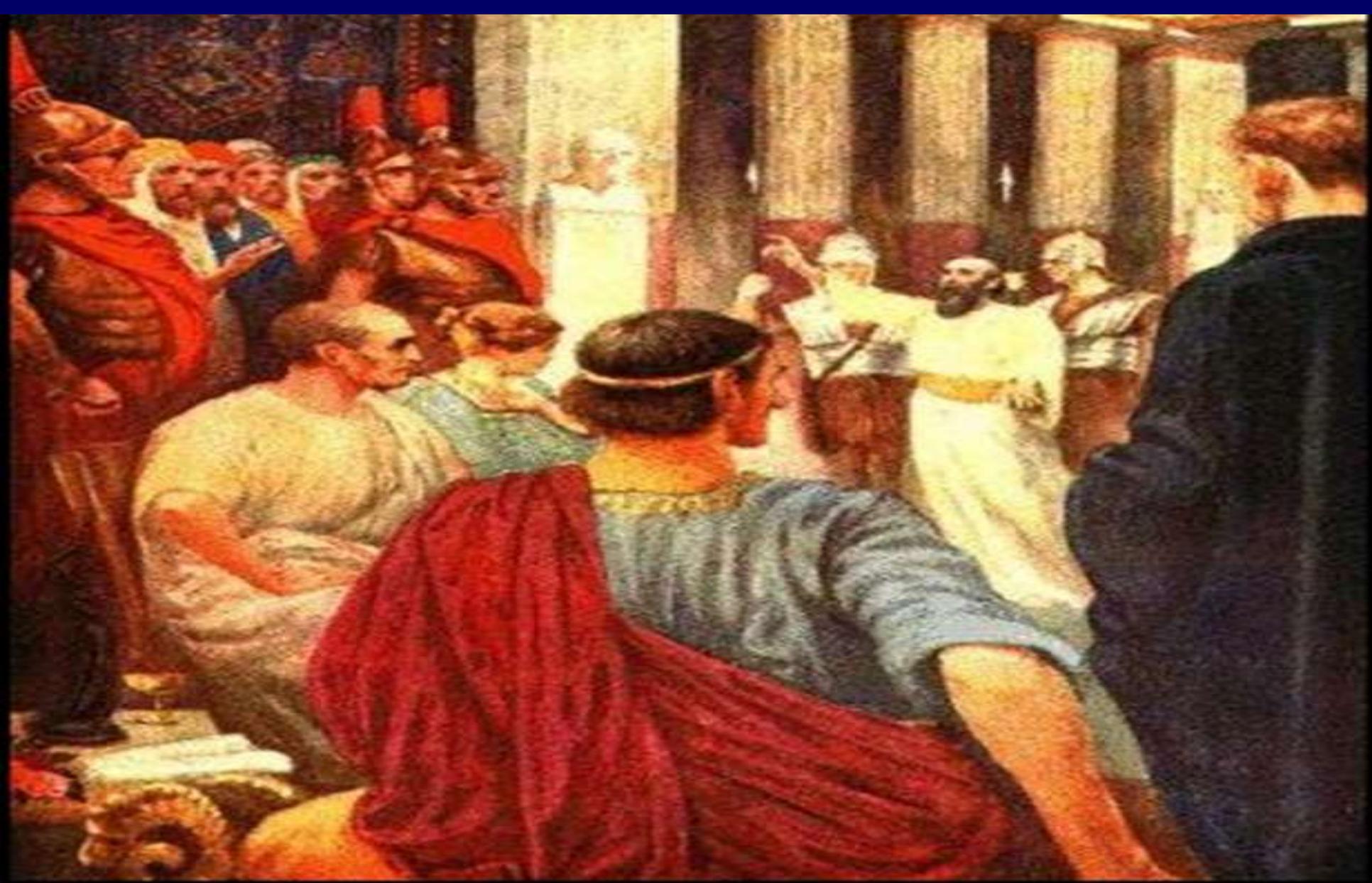
What city? **Caesarea.**

How far from **Jerusalem?**

About **70 miles.**



Acts 25:24; "And Festus said: "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer."



Acts 25:24; “And Festus said: “King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer.”

Festus is giving the whole audience a great ‘**introduction**’ of the things that are happening among them.

Festus goes straight to the point.
This man has been requested **by the Jews** that **he is not fit to live any longer.**

The reason?

There are no reasons
just pure lies and speculations.

Acts 25:25; “But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him.”

If Festus had already found out that Paul has done nothing worthy of death, why did he ask him: Do you want to go to Jerusalem and there be tried?

BIBLE PROPHECY!

The words of Jesus had to be fulfilled somehow and God often used sinful men, on many occasions, to carry out His work and purposes.

By **Festus** asking that question, **Paul appealed to Caesar** and that is **the will of God**, that **he can go to Rome**.

Acts 25:26; “I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write.”

Festus seems useless and incapable.

Who put him in that position in the first place?

I have nothing to write to my **'lord'** who is the **Lord?**

That's **the reason why, King Agrippa,**
I bring this man in front of you; So that
you can help me put something on paper
for 'Augustus' my lord, Caesar, Nero.

Acts 25:27; “For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him.”

Festus says: I don't want to send this man to my lord like this, without a crime.

Felix had left **Festus** in a big mess concerning **Paul** and now, they **all** are passing the **responsibility** for making the right decision to one another.

Festus thinks it would not be wise to send Paul up to the Imperial court without the charges specified against him if he could in any way ascertain them.

Acts 25:27; “For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him.”

Festus would have to send Paul to the emperor
charges or no charges simply because
Paul had appealed to the emperor
to make a final disposition of his case.

While they try to figure out a solution it will be
an opportunity for both **Festus and Agrippa**
to learn more about **the Way**, as Paul calls it.

The hearing will give Paul
another opportunity to preach the gospel.



Acts 25:27; “For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him.”

From **Paul’s speech before Festus and Agrippa**, recorded in **chapter 26**, we learn a **few more details about Paul’s conversion**.

This will be the **third time** the story has been told in the **book of Acts**.

We can also **fill in more details** about **Paul’s conversion** from statements in his letters, such as **Galatians 1 and 2**;

A New Sun Arose!

By Ellis Jones

Malachi 4:2; The sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings [rays].

**A new Sun arose one day
To brighten the world's sky.
Before that True Sun could rise,
First He had to die.**

A New Sun Arose.



Amos 8:9; “In that day, declares the Sovereign LORD, “I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight.”

**The old sun set upon the cross.
It was a sad, dark day.
But with the rising of God’s Son,
The darkness passed away.**

Numbers 24:17; “I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not near.
A star will come out of Jacob;
a sceptre will rise out of Israel.”

**The star that once lit Bethlehem,
Was dimmed but for awhile.
Far brighter now,
God’s Son shines down,
In Him we see God’s smile.**



**The hope he gives goes out to all.
That “Sun” can warm the soul.
Its rays can brighten any heart,
Though it be black as coal.**





**Many years have come and gone
Since Resurrection Day.
That “Sun” shines bright as ever
now. No clouds steal it away.**



**No cloud of doubt will last for long,
It melts beneath His love.
When things look dark and gloomy
here, Just cast your eyes above.**

**Acts 25:1-26:32;
Paul Before Festus and Agrippa.
Paul escapes another plot.**

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**Next in the series:- Acts 26:1-32;
Paul's defence before Agrippa.**