

Paul's Trials Before Festus & Agrippa (part 1)

Acts Chapter 25

Paul has been in custody for 2 years under Felix. Felix a cruel governor has found nothing criminal with Paul but Felix procrastinated continually concerning Paul's release and procrastinated continually concerning Paul's message. This was a tragic decision that affected his eternal destiny. Felix lost his job and Festus replaces him.

Act 25:1 1) Paul's Trial Before Festus vs 1-2

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

- Festus is on a tour of the area he governs. Felix was such a poor governor that the people were antagonistic towards the authority. Festus is making his rounds to ease tension and familiarize himself with the providence and issues he has inherited from Felix.
- Festus shows wisdom in gathering information with which to govern his province.
- One of the issues he'll find out is Paul.

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

Act 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 chief priests bring up Paul to Festus who doesn't know the details or the history.
- They rehash the charges.
- They request Paul's extradition to Jerusalem.
- They arrange another plot to ambush Paul.

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

Act 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 didn't buy into the chief priests' proposal.
- Festus told them to come to Caesarea and bring their charges against Paul with them. Festus would look into the matter there.
- Festus is showing wisdom in that he does not make hasty decisions without considering matters first.

Act 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.

Act 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,

Act 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."

- Festus, upon his return to Caesarea, has a tribunal and deals with Paul's case. Festus is not like Felix in that Felix procrastinated. Felix put things off.
- The same thing occurred as in the trial before Felix. Accusations without evidence and a list of issues pertaining to Jewish customs and doctrinal disputes. But no real infractions against Roman law.
- Paul's defense is the same.
- This reminds us that the schemes of the enemy (Satan) are not inventive, they are simply the same.

Act 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?}"

Act 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.

Act 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."

Act 25:12 Then when Festus had conferred with his council, he answered, "You have appealed to Caesar,

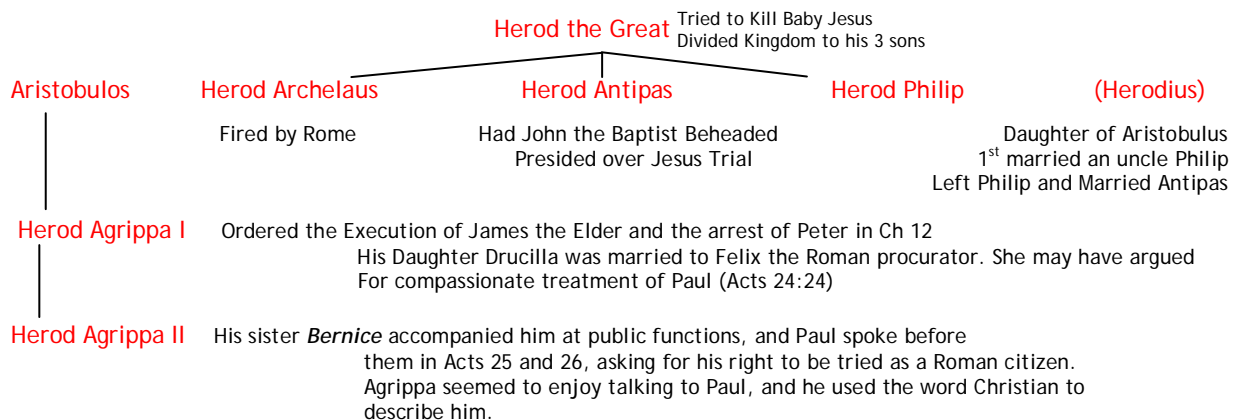
to Caesar you shall go."

- Festus wasn't doing anything wrong in trying to move the location of the trial. He was simply thinking he could accomplish two things.
 - 1) dealing with Paul
 - 2) showing the Jews that he is their governor as well.
- Roman law didn't allow changing location of trials without the defendant's permission.
- Paul was not afraid to face death. He knew he would live forever with the Lord.
- **2 Corinthians 5:6-9** "So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. That is why we live by believing and not by seeing. Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. So our aim is to please him always, whether we are here in this body or away from this body." NLT
- Paul had been in custody for 2 years. Here was his opportunity to finally get to court and have his case heard and dealt with. But he appeals to Caesar. (*This would be Caesar Nero. At this time Nero had not shown himself an enemy to Christians. Paul had no reason to be concerned about him.*)
- Sometimes we have to **WAIT**.
 - Improper response to waiting is disappointment
 - Improper response to waiting is frustration
 - Improper response to waiting is complaining
 - Improper response to waiting is becoming sidetracked
 - Improper response to waiting is pushing ahead anyway
- Benefits to waiting
 - Waiting properly, prepares individual
 - Waiting properly, prepares others
 - Waiting properly, allows circumstances to line up
 - Waiting properly, prevents hazards
 - Waiting properly, produces Fruit of the Spirit (patience vs. impatience)
 - Mostly, Waiting properly, nurtures Trust in Jesus.

Act 25:13 2) Festus Asks Agrippa for Assistance vs 13-22

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

- King Agrippa comes to congratulate Festus on his new post. It was a nice thing to do as well as a good political move on Agrippa's part.
- Festus isn't really knowledgeable about the finer details of the Jewish religion.
- This Agrippa is Agrippa II. He was the son of Herod Agrippa I,
- WHICH HEROD?



- Herod Agrippa II was friends with Caesar Nero and being an Idumean/Edomite (Jewish from line of Esau) had an understanding of the Jewish religion and customs. Therefore he was given an appointment over Palestine.
- Bernice, the eldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I and Cypros, is one of the most shameless and immoral women of the Bible. She had incestuous relationships with both her uncle Herod and her brother, Agrippa II. Bernice was also the mistress of Vespasian and Titus, but when Titus became emperor he cast her off.

- Act 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;
- Act 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.
- Act 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.
- Act 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.
- Act 25:18 "When the accusers stood up, they {began} bringing charges against him not of such crimes as I was expecting,
- Act 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.
- This demonstrates that Festus hears the facts of the dispute but doesn't understand fully what is going on and consults with Agrippa.
 - Confused because:
 - No Evidence just accusation - Jews had no evidence of wrong doing
 - Ignorance - Festus understood Roman Law but didn't fully understand Jewish customs
 - Felix Sin - Didn't understand why Felix had him in custody so long. (*Felix was a procrastinator and wanted to exploit Paul for money*)
 - Our sin will put others in confusion. Because everyone operates under the assumption that other people are doing the right thing.
- Act 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.
- Act 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."
- Act 25:22 Then Agrippa {said} to Festus, "I also would like to hear the man myself." "Tomorrow," he *said, "you shall hear him."

Act 25:23 **3) Paul's Trial Before Agrippa and Bernice** vs 23-27

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.

- This is more of a hearing rather than a trial. Agrippa doesn't have jurisdiction over these matters.

Festus calls the hearing to order with an opening statement.

- Act 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.
- Act 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.
- Act 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.
- Act 25:27 "For it seems absurd to me in sending a prisoner, not to indicate also the charges against him."
- Festus presents:
 - Jews present this man to me to be put to death
 - They do not present any evidence justifying that penalty
 - But this man appealed to Caesar
 - Festus requests:
 - Agrippa to hear the matter
 - To determine whether this should end or to determine what should be written when forwarding Paul to Caesar.

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