

Acts 25:1 ¶ Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

Acts 25:2 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,

Acts 25:3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.

After arriving in Israel, Festus stayed in Caesarea for three days before heading to Jerusalem. Upon arriving in Jerusalem, the high priest and some of the other leading religious authorities came before him to once again press charges against Paul. They asked him to send for Paul and bring him to Jerusalem. Once again, they plotted to kill him en route.

Acts 25:4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly *thither*.

Acts 25:5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with *me*, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

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

I am assuming that Felix had apprised him of the situation since he refused their request and told them that they would have to come to Caesarea to make their case. He stayed in Jerusalem for ten more days before returning to Caesarea. The day after returning he commanded for Paul to appear before him at the judgment seat.

Acts 25:7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

Acts 25:8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.

Luke records only a short summary of both prosecution and defense at this point.

The Jewish delegation from Jerusalem was in attendance and made many serious charges against Paul that they could not prove. Paul once again denied that he had not broken any law of the Jews, nor desecrated the temple, nor acted in defiance of Caesar. He was simply not guilty of any offense for which he was charged.

Acts 25:9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

Acts 25:10 Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

Acts 25:11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.

Acts 25:12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.

Because Festus was new on the job, he wanted to please the Jewish leaders. He asked Paul if he would be willing to go up to Jerusalem to be tried in court before him. Paul knew that such a trip would result in his death. He told Festus that he was already standing in the rightful place of judgment. Paul boldly declared that Festus already knew that he was not guilty of any wrongdoing. He went on to state that he was ready to accept a guilty verdict if he was deserving of such, but he wasn't. He was not about to endanger his life by agreeing to a suicidal trip; therefore, he appealed to Caesar. Though Festus conferred with his advisors, he really had no choice according to Roman law but to send Paul to Caesar since he was a Roman citizen.

Acts 25:13 ¶ And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus.

Acts 25:14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:

Acts 25:15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.

Acts 25:16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

Sometime later king Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to welcome Festus to Israel. After several days Festus told the king about Paul's case. He told the king that Felix had left a certain man in custody that the religious leaders in Jerusalem were eager to have condemned to death. He had told these leaders that Roman law forbade the condemnation of any man without due process of law that allowed him to defend himself against the charges made against him.

Acts 25:17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth.

Acts 25:18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:

Acts 25:19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

Acts 25:20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

Acts 25:21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar.

Festus notes the intense hatred of these Jews by noting that they were present the very next day on his return to Caesarea to see Paul tried. The governor goes on to tell the king that he was surprised once he heard their accusations against the man. There was nothing for which he could adjudicate against Paul according to Roman law; their accusations all centered on the practice of their own "superstitions" and the fact that he declared himself a follower of Jesus—a man

that had been killed but whom Paul declared to be alive.

Festus declared that he did not know how to proceed against such charges, so he asked Paul if he would be willing to stand trial in Jerusalem. Paul had refused and appealed his case to Caesar and was now in custody until he could make arrangements to send him to Rome.

Acts 25:22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

Acts 25:23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.

Acts 25:24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and *also* here, crying that he ought not to live any longer.

Acts 25:25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

Agrippa told Festus that he would like to hear from Paul himself, so Festus told him he would arrange it for the next day. Agrippa and Bernice entered the justice hall with great ceremony accompanied by some of the most prominent men and military leaders in the city. Festus then commanded that Paul be brought forward. Festus identified Paul as the man against whom many of the Jewish leaders both in Caesarea and in Jerusalem are seeking the death penalty. The governor also made it clear that he could not find that Paul had done anything worthy of pronouncing such judgment. He noted that Paul had appealed to Caesar, and that he was determined to honor his request.

Acts 25:26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.

Acts 25:27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes *laid* against him.

Now the pretext for this gathering—to let king Agrippa question Paul and help Festus determine how to compose a letter to Caesar in sending the man to Caesar to stand trial. Festus didn't think the Caesar would consider it reasonable to have a man sent to appear before him for trial without identifying specific charges against him.