

Survey of Acts - 11 (Acts 24-25)

Paul's Defense Before Felix and Festus

INTRODUCTION

It was five days after Paul was sent to Caesarea before the Jewish leadership arrived to press charges. Unable to come to a decision, Governor Felix ordered Paul to be kept in custody until his case could be resolved. Paul spent two years in custody until Festus replaced Felix as Governor of Judea. When Festus tried to send Paul back to Jerusalem for trial, Paul appealed to Caesar for judgment. Before being sent to Rome, Paul had the opportunity to speak to King Agrippa (Herod Agrippa II) and his sister Bernice.

Picture: Ruins of Herod's Palace (Praetorium) in Caesarea



Herod's palace is located on the small promontory in the center of the picture. Paul was held here when he arrived in Caesarea (Acts 23:35).

Paul lived in Caesarea for two years until he appealed to Caesar and was sent to Rome.

Caesarea was also the home of Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8).

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Key People:

1. **Antonius Felix:** Governor of Judea. He was appointed around AD52 (sources vary) and recalled in AD59 ⁽¹⁾. He was married to Drusilla, the daughter of Herod Agrippa I (mentioned in Acts 12:2, 23). Drusilla was the sister of Herod Agrippa II and Bernice (mentioned below); she and her son Agrippa (by Felix) were killed in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius (AD79).
2. **Porcius Festus:** Governor of Judea, AD59-62 ⁽²⁾. There is some dispute as to when he was appointed, some suggest AD57, but F.F. Bruce notes a coinage change in AD59 consistent with his appointment. Paul was sent to Rome in the first year of his governorship.
3. **Herod Agrippa II:** Son of Herod Agrippa I and great grandson of Herod the Great (who ruled at the time of Jesus's birth). His companion was his sister Bernice, who would later become the mistress of Roman General Titus. Sources differ on whether Agrippa II died in AD93 or AD100 ⁽³⁾. The Herodian dynasty ended with his death.

Notes:

(1) Bruce, F.F.; *New Testament History*; Doubleday, NY, NY; 1969; (pg. 357)

(2) Ibid. (pg. 340)

(3) Bromiley, G.W. (General Editor); ISBE Vol 2; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1982 (pg. 698)

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QUESTIONS

1. The Jews accuse Paul before Felix (Acts 24:1-21)

1.1 How many days was it before the Jews came to Caesarea to press charges against Paul?

1.2 Who came from Jerusalem?

1.3 From Acts 24:3-6, list four accusations made against Paul.

1.

2.

3.

4.

1.4 Is the account in Acts 24:6-8 accurate based upon the events from Acts 21-23?

1.5 What did the Jews call the church (Acts 24:5)? How did Paul refer to it (Acts 24:14)?

1.

2.

1.6 Summarize Paul's defense in Acts 24:10-21.

1.7 What two resurrections does Paul mention in his defense?

1.

2.

1.8 Why did Paul want Jews from Asia to come before Felix? (See Acts 21:27)

2. The outcome of the trial before Felix (Acts 24:22-27)

2.1 List two conditions of Paul's confinement in Caesarea.

1.

2.

2.2 Who was Felix waiting for before rendering judgment?

2.3 In Acts 24:24-25, what frightened Felix?

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2.4 What was Felix hoping to get from Paul?

2.5 How long was Paul in custody?

2.6 Why did Felix leave Paul in custody?

3. Paul before Festus and Agrippa (Acts 25)

3.1 After Festus replaced Felix as Governor, where did he go?

3.2 Paul had been in custody for two years. Had the Jews forgotten about him?

3.3 What did the Jews request of Festus? Why?

3.4 List three points in Paul's defense before Festus.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

3.5 Why did Paul appeal to Caesar?

3.6 List four points Festus makes about Paul to Agrippa.

1. (25:14)
2. (25:15-16)
3. (25:17-19)
4. (25:20-21)

3.7 What was Festus judgment on the guilt or innocence of Paul?

3.8 What was the problem Festus had with sending Paul to Rome?