

# Acts 25:1-27

## Paul Before Festus

Jeremy Doan

Holly Hills Bible Church

30 November 2014

# Testifying to the facts

- Paul is arrested at the temple in Jerusalem – 21:27-36
  - Paul speaks to the people – 21:37-22:21
  - Paul declares his Roman citizenship before being whipped – 22:22-29
- Paul before the Jewish council – 22:30-23:11
  - Sets the Pharisees and the Saducees against one another
  - The Lord tells Paul<sup>1</sup> that he will testify in Rome – 23:11
  - The Jews plot to kill Paul – 23:12-22
  - Paul whisked away to Caesarea – 22:23-35
- Paul speaks before Governor Felix – 24:1-21
  - He seems to make an impression on Felix
  - Kept in custody for two years – 24:22-26
    - Felix was hoping Paul would “bribe” him
    - He regularly conversed with Paul
  - Felix is replaced by Festus – 24:27

---

<sup>1</sup>in a vision

## Laid out their case

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

- The Jewish leaders had been planning and scheming and arguing against Paul for two years
  - Presumably they were bugging Felix the whole time
  - They wanted Festus to send Paul to Jerusalem so that they could assassinate him<sup>2</sup> on the way
  - How much foresight went into this planning?
    - Would the Romans be very happy with them had they succeeded?
- Festus notes that he'll be going to Caesarea in a few days
  - Is Festus less interested in Jewish favor than Felix?<sup>3</sup>
  - Do we see God's providence in these events?

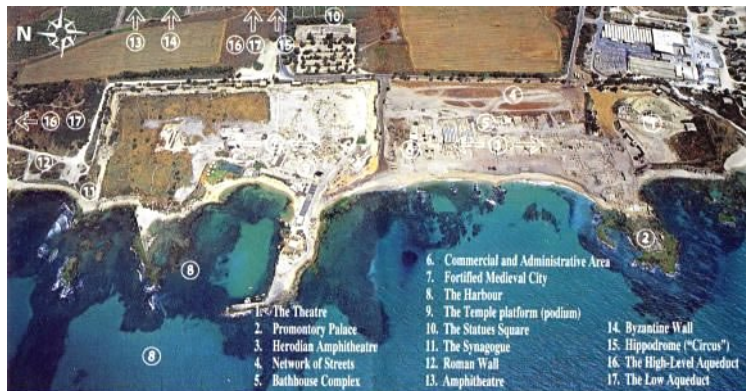
---

<sup>2</sup>Paul

<sup>3</sup>more on this in a bit

# What's the deal with Caesarea?

- Caesarea was the Roman seat of government in Israel
- Built by Herod the Great
- Important seaport



## Doing the Jews a favor

*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,*

- *Bringing many and serious charges against him which they could not prove*
  - Charges are: stirs up riots and profanes the temple (24:5-6)
- *"I have committed no offense either against the Law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar"*
  - Possibly a summation of a defense similar to 24:10-21
- *But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor*
  - The Roman leaders would do almost anything to avoid civil unrest
  - Suggests the trial be moved to Jerusalem
- *"I am standing before Caesars tribunal, where I ought to be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you also very well know."*
  - Paul, standing on his legal rights, appeals to Caesar

## Who, what, where, why, and how?

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

- Appealing to Caesar
  - Why did Festus have to deliberate on Paul's appeal?
  - Why did Paul make this appeal?
    - Did he know about the plot to kill him?
    - Was he thinking of the vision from 23:11?
- Chain of command: Claudius Lysias → Felix/Festus → Herod Agrippa II
- Herod Agrippa II
  - Son of Herod Agrippa 1, referenced in Acts 12:21
  - Great-grandson of Herod the Great, referenced in Matthew 2
  - Married to his sister, Bernice
  - He was part Jewish, and understood Jewish law

## Certain points of dispute

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;*

- Festus debriefs Agrippa on the situation regarding Paul<sup>4</sup>
  - The Jews at Jerusalem brought charges against Paul
  - Festus convened a tribunal where Paul could face his accusers
  - The charges were really just inside baseball
  - Paul appealed to Caesar
- Side note: both Felix and Festus are corrupt in their own ways
  - "Felix is attracted to Paul and his message, yet seeks a bribe and leaves Paul in prison to appease Paul's enemies. Festus presents a favorable image of himself to the public, but his handling of Paul's case is tainted with favoritism. Neither one is willing to offend the high priests and elders by releasing Paul."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>probably seeking some assistance with the case

<sup>5</sup>Tannehill, by way of Constable

## After we examine him

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

- *Agrippa came together with Bernice amid great pomp*
  - Why might Agrippa take interest in this case?
- Festus formally presents the case against Paul
  - The Jews are calling for Paul's death
  - Festus finds no reason for such a sentence
  - Paul has appealed to Caesar
  - Festus wants to examine Paul so he has something to send to Caesar
    - *"For it seems absurd to me in sending a prisoner, not to indicate also the charges against him."*