

Acts Chapter 25 Handout

Festus served as governor of Judea (procurator) 59-61 ad after Felix was called back to Rome because of the complaints of his cruelty and his incompetence in keeping order.

v.1-6 - After spending 3 days in Caesarea, Festus went to Jerusalem where the high priest told him about Paul. This is two years later and the Jews still have not let this go. They wanted Paul brought to Jerusalem, where they still were going to ambush and kill him, but Festus said no. They had to come to Caesarea to accuse him if there is anything valid to accuse him of.

v. 7-12 - In Caesarea Paul is brought before Festus , and the Jews from Jerusalem stood around and raised complaints which they could not prove. Paul then defends himself saying he has not offended the Jews, the temple nor Caesar. Festus, wanting to do something to get the favor of the Jews, asks Paul if he would go back to Jerusalem to be judged. Paul, probably remembering that the Jews had sought to kill him 2 years ago, insists on his right as a Roman citizen to be tried before Caesar. He also indicates to Festus that he (the governor) knows that Paul has done no wrong. Festus agrees to send Paul to Caesar.

v.13-27 - Some days later king Agrippa and his sister Bernice came to greet Festus. Agrippa, son of Herod Agrippa (who killed James) ruled over northern Palestine. His sisters were Bernice and Drusilla (wife of Felix). Festus tells Agrippa about Paul and admits that Paul has done nothing worthy of death and that his accusers only brought complaints about their “superstition”. In other words, this has nothing to do with Roman law. Agrippa tells Festus that he would like to hear Paul himself. On the next day when Paul is brought to Agrippa, Festus presents him and tells him that he wants Agrippa to examine Paul so that he (Festus) would have something to write down describing his crimes when he sends him to Augustus (that’s a title; the emperor at the time was Nero).

Chapter 26

This whole chapter is primarily devoted to Paul’s defense before Agrippa. v.1-3 is a greeting where Paul tells Agrippa that he is happy to defend himself and that he knows that Agrippa is expert in the customs and questions concerning the Jews. Although Idumaeans, (Edomite) in 126 b.c. John Hyrcanus subdued them and forced them to be circumcised and accept Judaism. v.4-23- Paul goes over his life from youth, to persecution of this new way, to his conversion, and describes what he’s been preaching. In v.6 hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers is the promised Christ. v.7. Twelve tribes is another name for Israel. Paul says he stands there accused for his belief in the hope of Israel that God promised them. V. 22 I only preached those things that were promised by prophets and Moses.

v.24-32 - Agrippa asks if Paul is mad when he starts talking of the resurrection of Christ. Paul says no. Agrippa you know about these things because v. 26 they were not done in a corner. Do you believe the prophets King Agrippa? Agrippa throws it back at

him “do you think you can convince me to be a Christian in just one day? (thou almost persuades me...) Paul says I wish so for you and all that hear me. After dismissing Paul they conferred with one another and agreed that Paul had done no crime and could have been set at liberty had he not appealed to Caesar.