

Paul's Appeal

Session Nineteen

During his two year captivity in Caesarea, Paul writes the following epistles: Philemon (AD 59), Colossians (AD 59), Ephesians (AD 59), 2 Timothy (AD 60). What is the one letter (of the 13 we have in the Bible) Paul has left to write?

Acts 25:1-12

Felix is gone, Festus has come. (They didn't even have to change the monogrammed towels in the *praesidium*—that's convenient!) Josephus tells us Felix was “recalled to Rome to explain his savage suppression of a dispute between Jews and Syrians over their civil rights in Caesarea, and would have been severely punished but for his brother Pallas' appeal to Nero. Not much is known about Porcius Festus...” (Stott, 365). He dies in office two years later, seems to have been just and moderate than those before or after him.

Festus offers to have Paul tried in _____. Why?

- a) the religious charge against Paul made the Sanhedrin a more appropriate forum
- b) Festus wanted to do a favor for the Jews
- c) Festus is new on the job—while he is ambitious, he is not foolish
- d) all of the above

“*I appeal to Caesar!*” Paul exercises this ancient right which protected him from summary punishment, execution or torture without trial, from private or public arrest, and from actual trial by magistrates outside Italy” (Stott, 367).

Acts 25:13-22

King Herod Agrippa II and Bernice are

- a) siblings
- b) husband/wife
- c) king/mistress
- d) Facebook buddies

Herod Agrippa II was the son of Herod Agrippa I of Acts 12 and the great grandson of Herod the Great (think the Wise Men). He was 17 when his dad died and was considered too young to rule Judea. He ruled an insignificant kingdom (in modern day Lebanon) but significantly, the Emperor Claudius committed to him the care of the _____ and the appointment of the _____.

Acts 25:23-27

In reality, “what Festus lacked was not charges, but evidence to substantiate them” as well as the courage to dismiss the case that had no basis (Stott, 369).

Acts 26:1-23

“It was a dramatic moment when the holy and humble apostle of Jesus Christ stood before this representative of the worldly, ambitious, morally corrupt family of the Herods, who for generation after generation had set themselves in opposition to truth and righteousness. Their founder, Herod the Great, had tried to destroy the infant Jesus. His son, Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, beheaded John the Baptist, and won from the Lord the title of ‘fox’. His grandson Agrippa slew James with the sword. Now we see Paul brought before Agrippa’s son” (Stott, 370).

Paul’s story can be divided into three sections:

- 1) Saul, the strict Pharisee (v. 4-8)
- 2) Saul, the fanatical persecutor (v. 9-11)
- 3) Paul, the commissioned apostle (v. 12-18)

Christ to Paul: “I have appeared to you.”

“I will rescue you.”

“I am sending you.”

Holy drama! What was each person defending?

Paul in Caesarea, AD 59: *“I stand here.”*

Luther in Worms, 1521: *“Here I stand.”*

Acts 26:24-32

After being interrupted by Festus, Paul coolly responds, then boldly addresses King Agrippa directly and witnesses to him publicly!

What’s the answer to the “short time” in v. 28? Paul must have been thinking, “Trust me. When God is involved, conversion doesn’t take very long!” And yet, it can take years, sometimes a whole life, before someone repents and trusts the Lord for salvation.

How does Paul demonstrate that he cares more about saving others than himself? Are we as noble and missional?

Neither Felix, Festus or Agrippa found Paul guilty. To set Paul free, as Agrippa alludes in v. 32, would have been to short-circuit his appeal to Caesar and so invade the Emperor’s territory. No provincial judge would dare to do that” (Stott, 377).

Discuss this statement: “Paul was a faithful Jew, a faithful Roman and a faithful Christian” (Stott, 378).

Just two chapters in Acts left! Read Acts 27 and 28, and read Philippians—written from prison in Rome!