

Wednesday, October 11, 2023
SHAKEN
PART 22: PAUL'S DEFENSE IN CAESAREA

Tonight, we rejoin Paul in Caesarea. You may remember that Paul was detained in Jerusalem under a false accusation of bringing Gentiles into the temple. When a plot was uncovered to kill him, the Romans transport Paul to Caesarea for his protection. Felix, the Roman governor of Judea summons Paul's accusers and the trial begins.

[Acts 24:1-21 \(NKJV\)](#)

The High Priest brings a lawyer to Caesarea named Tertullus. He accuses Paul of 3 criminal offenses:

1. Paul created disturbances throughout the empire.
2. Paul disturbed the Jews in the exercise of their religion.
3. Paul introduced new gods – something prohibited by the Romans.

Tertullus refuses to use the name that the followers of Jesus have been called for some time – Christian – because Christ implies Messiah. Paul states that he is guilty of none of the listed offenses other than being a believer in Jesus. He tells Felix that his belief is not a new religion but the fulfillment of the Jewish belief and basically says that he has been arrested because of a sectarian dispute over the resurrection.

[Acts 24:22-27 \(NKJV\)](#)

The governor decides to wait until Lysias, who arrested Paul comes to Caesarea before he decides the case. Felix is acquainted with Christianity. He wants to hear Paul teach the faith. Felix was a cruel and corrupt governor. He was known for taking bribes and for treating lawbreakers harshly. In 58 AD, he had the Jewish High Priest Jonathan assassinated because Jonathan threatened to inform Caesar off Felix's cruelty. Married 3 times, Felix's first 2 wives were named Drusilla. His second wife is Jewish. She was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I. Their son was killed in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in Pompey.

In front of someone who holds his life in their hands, Paul preaches boldly. Conviction falls but Felix delays repentance and instead, hopes Paul will bribe him for release which Paul will not do. Paul is detained for two years. Felix is replaced by Porcius Festus and Paul remains in detention.

[Acts 25:1-11 \(NKJV\)](#)

The High Priest informs Festus against Paul. They want Paul transferred back to Jerusalem for judgment. They plan to kill Paul along the road. Festus makes the Jewish leaders come to Caesarea for a hearing. There is really no evidence to have Paul sentenced. Wanting to appease the leaders, Festus asks Paul if he will stand trial in Jerusalem.

Paul sees the desire of Festus to please the Jewish leaders and refuses the change of venue – challenging the Romans to charge him with a crime against Rome. Paul appeals to a higher Roman court – the court of the emperor.

[Acts 25:13-27 \(NKJV\)](#)

The puppet king Agrippa II and Bernice come to congratulate Festus on his appointment. Agrippa is the last king of the Herodian dynasty. His sister was Felix's wife. He has a ceremonial marriage to his own sister, Bernice – with whom Josephus wrote he had an incestuous relationship. He sided with Rome in the Jewish rebellion of 66AD, and he and Bernice are expelled from the country. Festus asks Agrippa to hear Paul's defense so that he can write down the charges against him to send to Rome. This reveals that this detention is not based on breaking the law. Next time, Paul's defense before Agrippa.

Today's Scriptures:

- Acts 24
- Acts 25