

## ACTS of the APOSTLES: Summary of Ch. 24-26

**Background:** Remember in the last set of chapters, Paul was arrested at the temple in Jerusalem after the Jews from Asia stirred up the crowd and accused him of “teaching everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this place.” Paul defended himself before the Roman tribune (military leader), who didn’t realize Paul was a Roman citizen. Concerned, the tribune ordered the chief priests and council to meet so he could understand what Paul was being accused of. During the meeting the Pharisees and Sadducees disagreed on whether Paul had done anything wrong, and violence broke out. Paul was whisked away to the barracks, but the Jews plotted to kill him on his way back to the council the next day. Paul’s nephew discovered the plot and told the tribune, who secretly removed Paul to Caesarea. There, Felix the Governor could figure out what to do with him. At the beginning of Ch. 24, then, Paul is in Caesarea, waiting for Felix to hear his case.

### Chapter 24: Felix the Governor hears Paul’s case.

- The high priest Ananias, some elders, and an attorney named Tertullus arrive to make their case to Felix.
- Tertullus accuses Paul of being “a pestilent fellow,” “an agitator,” and a “ringleader” of the Nazarene sect. He also accuses Paul of profaning the temple.
- Paul defends himself, saying he had not been agitating at all but had been finishing his purification rite when he was attacked. He admitted he was part of the Way, worships the God of Israel, and believes everything in the law and prophets. He suggests that the crime they think he has committed may have to do with him talking about the resurrection of the dead.
- Felix says he will decide the case when the tribune arrives (which he apparently never does), and Paul remains in custody.
- At one point, Felix and his wife listen to Paul talk about Jesus, including “justice, self-control, and the coming judgment” (24:25). Although Felix becomes frightened and sends Paul away, Felix invites Paul back occasionally for conversations, hoping Paul will give him money.
- 2 years later, Felix the Governor is replaced by Festus. Paul is still in prison in Caesarea, having “some liberty” and freedom to see his friends.

### Chapter 25: Festus the (New) Governor wrestles with Paul’s case

- Festus arrives as the new Governor and gets a report from the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem about their problems with Paul. The leaders lobby to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, in hopes they can kill Paul along the way. Festus refuses to have Paul transferred but invites the leaders to come to Caesarea and accuse him there.
- After 10 days or so and back in Caesarea, the Jewish leaders accuse Paul of crimes they could not prove. Festus, “wishing to do the Jews a favor,” asks Paul if he wants to be tried in Jerusalem. Paul says he wants to be tried by the emperor’s tribunal. [NOTE: Roman citizens had the right to do that.]
- The emperor-appointed King Agrippa and his sister Bernice visit Festus, who seeks his advice. Festus casts the disagreement between the Jewish leaders and Paul as one over theological issues, which he doesn’t know how to adjudicate. Agrippa asks to hear from Paul himself.
- The next day, in front of Agrippa, Bernice, military tribunes, and “prominent men of the city,” Festus introduces the problem. He explains that Paul has appealed to the emperor, but Festus doesn’t know what charges to accuse him of. He hopes to get Agrippa’s help.

## Chapter 26: King Agrippa hears Paul's case

- Paul begins his speech by expressing his gratitude to King Agrippa listening to him, since Agrippa knows Jewish customs and laws. [NOTE: Agrippa is thought to have been a Jew.]
- As in Ch. 24, Paul claims he is being persecuted because he speaks about the resurrection of the dead. He reviews his own history as a persecutor of early Christians and then shares his conversion experience on the road to Damascus. He explains how Jesus sent him to the Gentiles to “turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so “that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in” Jesus. He claims he is “saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place: That the Messiah must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles” (26:19-23).
- Festus (the Governor) tells Paul he is out of his mind, that “too much learning is driving [him] insane.”
- Paul explains he is not out of his mind but that he is speaking freely because Agrippa understands the Jewish history. He then turns to Agrippa and asks him if he believes the prophets. Agrippa accuses him of trying to persuade him to be a Christian, and Paul says he desires everyone listening to “become such as I am—except for these chains” (26:29).
- Agrippa, Bernice, and some others abruptly leave, with Agrippa asserting that Paul has done nothing to deserve death or imprisonment and that he could be set free if he had not appealed to the emperor.