

A Plot Against Paul is Uncovered (Summer 55)

Acts 23:12–22

12 And *when it was day*, the Jews made a conspiracy *and* bound themselves under a curse, saying *they would* neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul.

13 Now there were more *than* forty who had made this conspiracy,

14 who went to the chief priests and the elders *and* said, “We have bound ourselves under a curse to partake of nothing until we have killed Paul.

15 Therefore, now you along with the Sanhedrin explain to the military tribune that he should bring him down to you, as *if you were* going to determine more accurately the things concerning him. And we are ready to do away with him before he comes near.”

16 But *when* the son of Paul’s sister heard about the ambush, he came and entered into the barracks *and* reported *it* to Paul.

17 So Paul called one of the centurions *and* said, “Bring this young man to the military tribune, because he has something to report to him.”

18 So he took him *and* brought *him* to the military tribune and said, “The prisoner Paul called me *and* asked *me* to bring this young man to you *because he* has something to tell you.”

19 And the military tribune, taking hold of his hand and withdrawing privately, asked, “What is it that you have to report to me?”

20 And he said, “The Jews have agreed to ask you that you bring Paul down to the Sanhedrin tomorrow, as *if they were* going to inquire somewhat more accurately concerning him.

21 You therefore do not be persuaded by them, because more *than* forty men of their number are lying in wait *for* him, who have bound themselves under a curse neither to eat nor to drink until they have done away with him. And now they are ready, waiting for you to agree.”

22 So the military tribune sent the young man away, directing *him*, “Tell no one that you have revealed these *things* to me.”

Paul Taken to Caesarea and Presented to Felix (Summer 55)

Acts 23:23–35

23 And he summoned two of the centurions *and* said, “Make ready from the third hour of the night two hundred soldiers and seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen, in order that they may proceed as far as Caesarea.

24 And provide mounts so that they can put Paul on them *and* bring *him* safely to Felix the governor.”

25 He wrote a letter that had this form:

26 Claudius Lysias.
To his excellency Governor Felix.
Greetings!

27 This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them *when I came* upon *them* with the detachment *and* rescued *him*, *because I* learned that he was a Roman citizen.

28 And *because I* wanted to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought *him* down to their Sanhedrin.

29 I found he was accused concerning controversial questions of their law, but having no charge deserving death or imprisonment.

30 And *when it was* made known to me there would be a plot against the man, I sent *him* to you immediately, also ordering *his* accusers to speak against him before you.

31 Therefore the soldiers, in accordance with their orders, took Paul *and* brought *him* to Antipatris during the night.

32 And on the next day they let the horsemen go on with him, *and* they returned to the barracks.

33 The horsemen, *when they* came to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, also presented Paul to him.

34 So *after reading the letter* and asking what province he was from, and learning that *he was* from Cilicia,

35 he said, “I will give you a hearing whenever your accusers arrive also,” giving orders *for* him to be guarded in the praetorium of Herod.

Paul’s Defense Before Felix (Summer 55)

Acts 24:1–23

1 And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and an attorney, a certain Tertullus, all of whom brought charges against Paul to the governor.

2 And *when* he had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse *him*, saying, “We have experienced much peace through you, and reforms are taking place in this nation through your foresight.

3 Both in every way and everywhere we acknowledge *this*, most excellent Felix, with all gratitude.

4 But so that I may not impose on you for longer, I implore you to hear us briefly with your *customary* graciousness.

5 For we have found this man *to be* a public menace and one who causes riots among all the Jews throughout the Roman Empire and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes,
 6 who even attempted to desecrate the temple, and we arrested him.
 7 [*this version follows NA²⁷ in omitting this verse*]
 8 *When* you yourself examine *him* you will be able to find out from him about all these *things* of which we are accusing him.”
 9 And the Jews also joined in the attack, asserting these *things* were so.
 10 And *when* the governor gestured for him to speak, Paul replied, “*Because I* know you have been a judge over this nation for many years, I defend myself cheerfully *with respect* to the things concerning myself.
 11 You can ascertain that it has not been more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship.
 12 And neither did they find me arguing with anyone or making a crowd develop in the temple *courts* nor in the synagogues nor throughout the city.
 13 Nor can they prove *the things* to you concerning which they are now accusing me.
 14 But I do confess this to you, that according to the Way (which they call a sect), so I worship the God of our fathers, believing all things *that are* in accordance with the law and that are written in the prophets,
 15 having a hope in God which these *men* also themselves await: *that* there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.
 16 For this reason also *I* myself always do my best to have a clear conscience toward God and people.
 17 So after many years, I came to practice charitable giving and offerings to my people,
 18 in which they found me purified in the temple *courts*, not with a crowd or with a disturbance.
 19 But *there are* some Jews from Asia who ought to be present before you and bring charges against *me*, if they have anything against me,
 20 or these *men* themselves should say what crime they found *when* I stood before the Sanhedrin,
 21 other than concerning this one declaration that I shouted *while* standing there before them: ‘I am being judged before you today concerning the resurrection of the dead!’”
 22 But Felix, *because he* understood the *facts* concerning the Way more accurately, put them off, saying, “When Lysias the military tribune comes down, I will decide your case.”
 23 *He* ordered the centurion *for* him to be guarded and to have some freedom, and in no way to prevent any of his own *people* from serving him.

Paul Under Felix’s Custody (Summer 55 to Summer 57)

Acts 24:24–26

24 And after some days, *when* Felix arrived with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and listened to him concerning faith in Christ Jesus.
 25 And *while* he was discussing about righteousness and self control and the judgment that is to come, Felix became afraid *and* replied, “Go away for the present, and *when I* have an opportunity, I will summon you.”
 26 At the same time he was also hoping that money would be given to him by Paul. For this reason also he sent for him as often as possible *and* talked with him.

Paul’s Appeal to Caesar Before Festus (Summer 57)

Acts 24:27–25:12

24:27 And *when* two years had passed, Felix received as successor Porcius Festus. And *because he* wanted to do a favor for the Jews, Felix left Paul behind as a prisoner.
 25:1 Now *when* Festus set foot in the province, after three days he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea.
 2 And the chief priests and the most prominent men of the Jews brought charges against Paul to him, and were urging him,
 3 asking for a favor against him, that he summon him to Jerusalem, *because they* were preparing an ambush to do away with him along the way.
 4 Then Festus replied *that* Paul was being kept at Caesarea, and *he* himself was about to go *there* in a short time.
 5 So he said, “Let those among you *who are* prominent go down with *me*, *and* if there is any wrong in the man, let them bring charges against him.”
 6 And *after he* had stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea. On the next day he sat down on the judgment seat *and* gave orders *for* Paul to be brought.
 7 And *when* he arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges that they were not able to prove,
 8 *while* Paul said in his defense, “Neither against the law of the Jews nor against the temple nor against Caesar have I sinned with reference to anything!”
 9 But Festus, *because he* wanted to do a favor for the Jews, answered *and* said to Paul, “Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem to be

tried before me there concerning these *things*?"

10 But Paul said, "I am standing before the judgment seat of Caesar, where it is necessary *for* me to be judged. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you also know very well.

11 If then I am doing wrong and have done anything deserving death, I am not trying to avoid dying. But if there is nothing *true* of *the things* which these *people* are accusing me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar!"

12 Then Festus, *after* discussing *this* with *his* council, replied, "You have appealed to Caesar—to Caesar you will go!"

Festus and Herod Agrippa II Discuss Paul's Case (Summer 57)

Acts 25:13–22

13 Now *after* some days had passed, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to welcome Festus.

14 And while they were staying there many days, Festus laid out the *case* against Paul to the king, saying, "There is a certain man left behind by Felix *as* a prisoner,

15 concerning whom *when* I was in Jerusalem the chief priests and the elders of the Jews presented evidence, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him.

16 To them I replied that it was not the custom of the Romans to give up any man before the one who had been accused met *his* accusers face to *face* and received an opportunity for a defense concerning the accusation.

17 Therefore, *when* they had assembled here, *I* made no delay; on the next *day* I sat down on the judgment seat *and* gave orders *for* the man to be brought.

18 *When they* stood up, *his* accusers began bringing no charge concerning him of the evil deeds that I was suspecting,

19 but they had some issues with him concerning their own religion, and concerning a certain Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul claimed to be alive.

20 And *because* I was at a loss with regard to the investigation concerning these *things*, I asked if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and to be judged there concerning these *things*.

21 But *when* Paul appealed *that* he be kept under guard for the decision of His Majesty the Emperor, I gave orders *for* him to be kept under guard until I could send him to Caesar."

22 So Agrippa *said* to Festus, "I want to hear the man myself also." "Tomorrow," he said, "you will hear him."

Paul's Defense Before Herod Agrippa II and His Sister Bernice (Summer 57)

Acts 25:23–26:32

25:23 So on the next day, Agrippa and Bernice came with great pageantry and entered into the audience hall, along with military tribunes and the most prominent men of the city. And *when* Festus gave the order, Paul was brought in.

24 And Festus said, "King Agrippa and all who are present with us, you see this man about whom the whole population of the Jews appealed to me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting *that* he must not live any longer.

25 But I understood *that* he had done nothing deserving death himself, and *when* this man appealed to His Majesty the Emperor, I decided to send *him*.

26 I do not have anything definite to write to *my* lord about him. Therefore I have brought him before you *all*—and especially before you, King Agrippa—so that *after* this preliminary hearing has taken place, I may have something to write.

27 For it seems unreasonable to me to send a prisoner and not to indicate the charges against him."

26:1 So Agrippa said to Paul, "It is permitted for you to speak for yourself." Then Paul extended *his* hand *and* began to defend himself:

2 "Concerning all *the things* of which I am accused by the Jews, King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate *that* before you I am about to defend myself today,

3 *because* you are especially acquainted with both all the customs and controversial questions with respect to the Jews. Therefore I beg *you* to listen to me with patience.

4 "Now all the Jews know my manner of life from *my* youth, that had taken place from the beginning among my *own* people and in Jerusalem,

5 having known me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that in accordance with the strictest party of our religion I lived *as* a Pharisee.

6 And now I stand here on trial on the basis of hope in the promise made by God to our fathers,

7 to which our twelve tribes hope to attain *as they* earnestly serve *him* night and day. Concerning this hope I am being accused by the Jews, O king!

8 Why is it thought incredible by you *people* that God raises the dead?

9 Indeed, I myself thought it was necessary to do many *things* opposed to the name of Jesus the Nazarene,

10 which I also did in Jerusalem, and not only did I lock up many of the saints in prison, having received authority from the chief priests, but also *when* they were being executed, I cast *my* vote against *them*.

11 And throughout all the synagogues I punished them often *and* tried to force *them* to blaspheme, and *because* I was enraged at

them beyond measure, I was pursuing *them* even as far as to foreign cities.

12 In this activity I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and full power of the chief priests.

13 In the middle of the day along the road, O king, I saw a light from heaven, more than the brightness of the sun, shining around me and those who were traveling with me.

14 And *when* we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Aramaic language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? *It is hard for you to kick against the goads!*’

15 So I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.

16 But get up and stand on your feet, because for this *reason* I have appeared to you, to appoint you a servant and witness both *to the things* in which you saw me and *to the things* in which I will appear to you,

17 rescuing you from the people and from the Gentiles to whom I am sending you,

18 to open their eyes *so that they* may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, *so that they* may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

19 “Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

20 but to those in Damascus first, and in Jerusalem and all the region of Judea and to the Gentiles, I proclaimed *that they should* repent and turn to God, doing deeds worthy of repentance.

21 On account of these *things* the Jews seized me in the temple *courts* and were attempting to kill *me*.

22 Therefore I have experienced help from God until this day, *and* I stand here testifying to both small and great, saying nothing except what both the prophets and Moses have said were going to happen,

23 that the Christ was to suffer *and* that *as* the first of the resurrection from the dead, he was going to proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.”

24 And *as* he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “You are out of your mind, Paul! *Your* great learning is driving you insane!”

25 But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but am speaking words of truth and rationality.

26 For the king knows about these *things*, to whom also I am speaking freely, for I am not convinced *that* these *things* in any way have escaped his notice, because this was not done in a corner.

27 Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa? I know that you believe.”

28 But Agrippa *said* to Paul, “In a short time are you persuading me to become a Christian?”

29 And Paul *replied*, “I pray to God, whether in a short time or in a long time, not only you but also all those who are listening to me today may become such *people* as I also am, except for these bonds!”

30 Both the king and the governor got up, and Bernice and those who were sitting with them.

31 And *as they* were going out, they were talking to one another, saying, “This man is not doing anything deserving death or imprisonment.”

32 And Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

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