ACTS 25

I Appeal to Caesar

a new governor, an old plot, a prisoner's appeal, and a king who wants to hear the man himself

> *"but they simply had some points of disagreement with him about their own religion and about a dead man, Jesus, whom Paul asserted to be alive."*
> ACTS 25:19

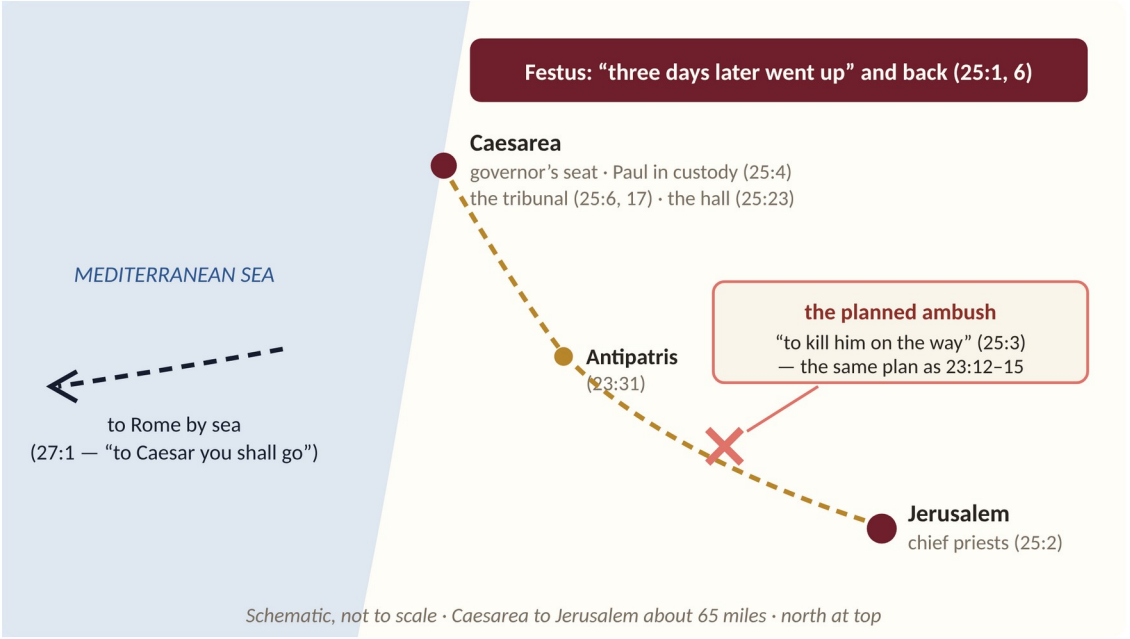
A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where Luke has brought us

1. Acts 25 opens after a long silence.

2. Festus had a better name than Felix.

3. Caesarea Maritima was Rome's capital in Judea, a port city Herod the Great had built on the coast, with a governor's palace (the Praetorium of Herod, 23:35), a theater and a harbor.



Three Days Later

A new governor in Jerusalem, and the old ambush offered again as a favor

ACTS 25:1

Festus then, having arrived in the province, three days later went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea.

DAVID GUZIK

Festus basically good; leaders knew Paul would be acquitted in any fair trial.

MATTHEW HENRY

How restless a thing malice is; inhuman, hellish methods.

ἐνέδρα
ENEDRA · "AMBUSH"

From en (in) and hedra (a seat): a "sitting in" — men sitting in wait.

I Appeal to Caesar

Many charges, no proof, a governor's favor — and a citizen's right

ACTS 25:8

while Paul said in his own defense, "I have committed no offense either against the Law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar."

DAVID GUZIK

Paul saw the plot; avoid martyrdom if you can; courts may be used lawfully.

MATTHEW HENRY

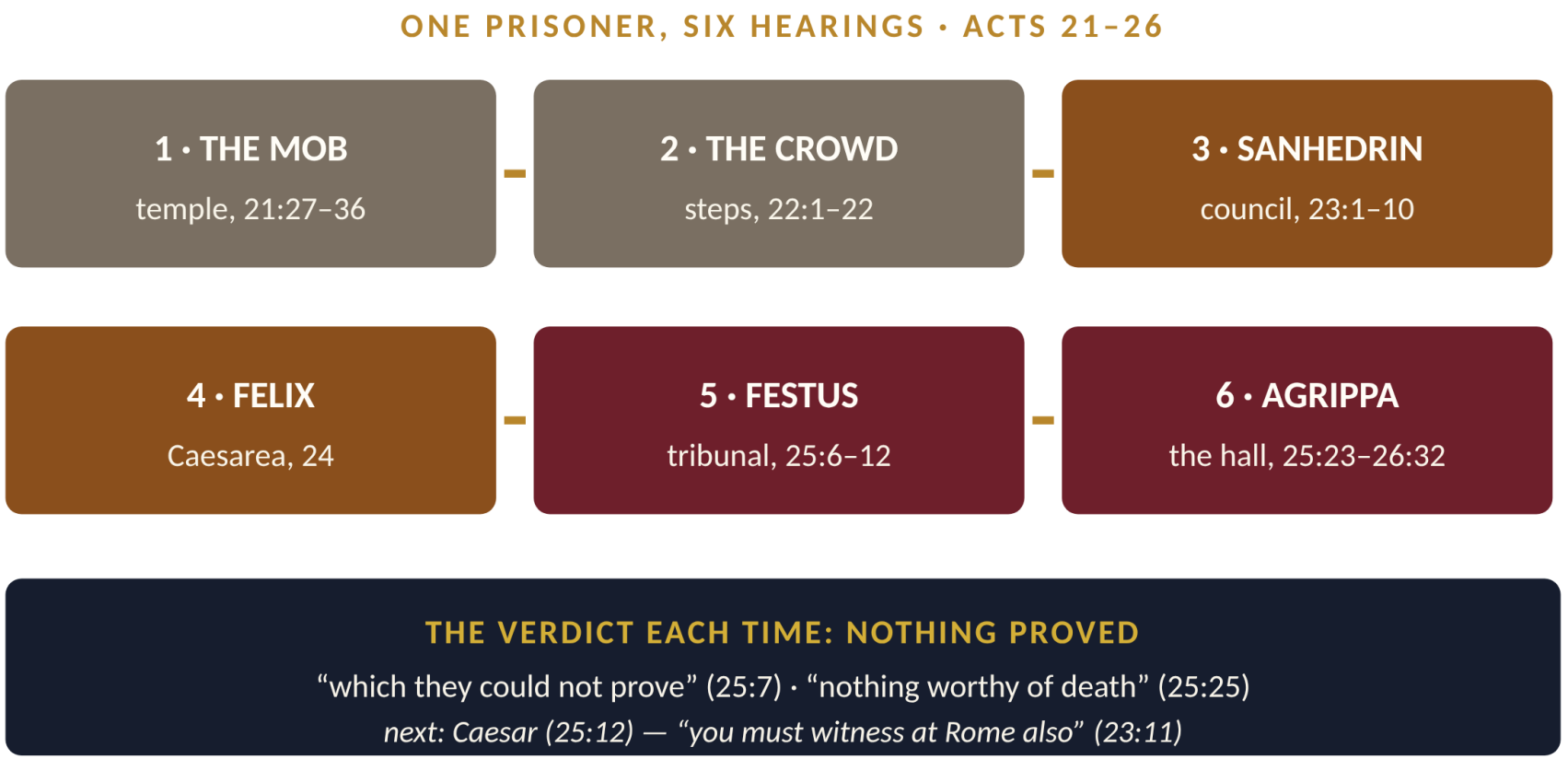
Quick but not just — Festus would not release him; "I appeal unto Cæsar."

βῆμα

BĒMA · "TRIBUNAL, JUDGMENT SEAT"

A raised platform, a step up; then the seat a magistrate sat on to give judgment.

One prisoner, six hearings



Read the boxes in order: every court Paul faced from the temple riot to King Agrippa found nothing it could prove, and the last step is Caesar.

A Dead Man Whom Paul Asserted to Be Alive

Festus lays the case before King Agrippa — and cannot make sense of it

ACTS 25:16

"I answered them that it is not the custom of the Romans to hand over any man before the accused meets his accusers face to face and has an opportunity to make his defense against the charges.

DAVID GUZIK

Agrippa's family history; "a certain Jesus" — still so little known.

C.H. SPURGEON

Jesus was nothing to Festus; true preaching affirms He lives.

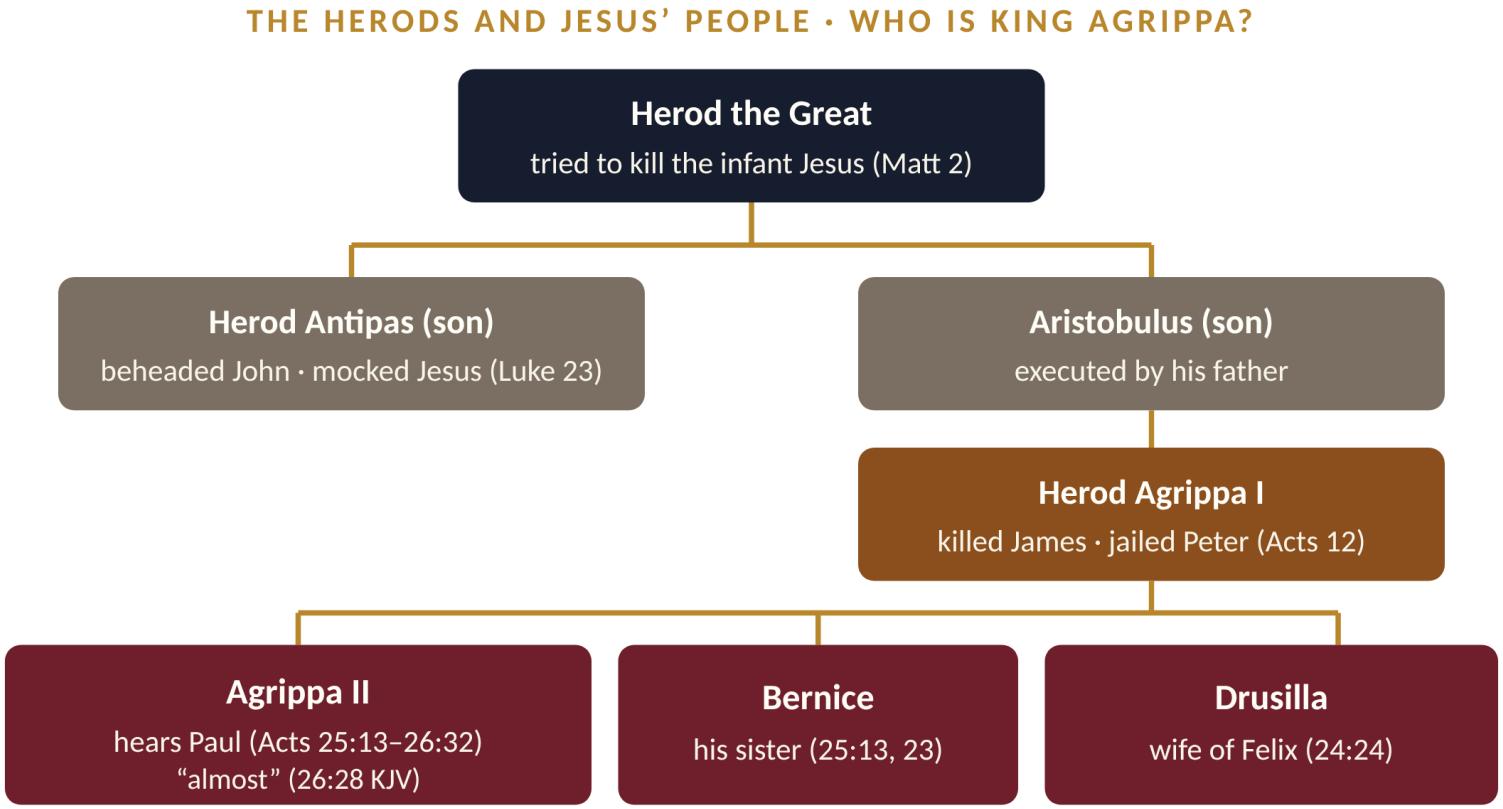
MATTHEW HENRY

How slightly this Roman speaks of Christ; all hangs on that question.

δεισιδαιμονία
DEISIDAIMONIA · "RELIGION"

Literally "fear of the divine powers."

The Herods and Jesus' people



Simplified — only the members named in the Gospels and Acts are shown.

King Agrippa came from a family that had opposed Jesus and His followers for three generations — and Paul offered him the same Christ.

Amid Great Pomp

The great hall fills with rank — and the man in chains is the one who matters

ACTS 25:23

So, on the next day when Agrippa came together with Bernice amid great pomp, and entered the auditorium accompanied by the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in.

DAVID GUZIK

Pomp says who is important; Paul had the greater dignity.

MATTHEW HENRY

Great pomp is but great fancy; nothing certain to write.

φαντασία

PHANTASIA · "POMP"

Only here in the New Testament: a show, a display, the parade of rank — the root of our words fantasy and phantom.

What to carry from this chapter

1

Malice waits two years.

Henry: “See how restless a thing malice is.”

2

Grace sunk to a favor.

Charis, the word for God’s grace, describes the “concession” the priests asked (v3) and the “favor” Festus wanted to do them (v9; 24:27).

3

Innocent, and still in chains.

“Charges” comes seven times in this chapter, and not once is anything proved (vv7, 18, 25).

4

Use the law; don’t court the lion.

Guzik: “He wasn’t afraid to face the lions, but he didn’t want to put his head in a lion’s mouth if he could avoid it.”

More to carry

5

He called on Caesar because he had called on the Lord.

Epikaleomai is the appeal to Caesar (v11) and the calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 2:21; Rom 10:13).

6

A higher tribunal.

Paul stood at Caesar's bēma (v10) knowing "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor 5:10).

7

The gospel in a pagan's mouth.

"A dead man, Jesus, whom Paul asserted to be alive" (v19).

8

Jesus is still little known.

Spurgeon: Festus "mentions the name as belonging to some obscure individual of whom he knew nothing and cared less."

Talk it through

1. Two years passed and the chief priests' hatred had not cooled. Is there a grudge I have kept warm for years — and what would it look like to lay it down?

2. Festus wanted to "do the Jews a favor" at Paul's expense. Where am I tempted to trade what is right for someone's approval?

3. Paul said, "I do not refuse to die" — and in the same breath appealed to Caesar. How do I hold together courage and wisdom when I am treated unjustly?

4. To Festus, Jesus was "a dead man" and a matter of "their own religion." How would the people around me describe Jesus from watching my life?

5. Is Jesus to me a dead man in a story, or a living Lord I speak to? What changes on an ordinary day if He is alive?

CLOSING

Acts 25 is a chapter of politics — favors asked and favors done, a governor in over his head, a king and his sister on parade. Through all of it God is moving one prisoner toward Rome, just as He promised. And when the governor tries to explain the case, he says it better than he knows: it is about Jesus, who died, and who is alive.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study and reflection journal: see the Acts study page.