

Arrest and Trials

In Jerusalem and Caesarea

Foundation

Bible passage : Acts 21-25

People had dragged Paul out of the Temple intending to kill him but Jerusalem was ruled by the Romans and their Tribune (commander of the arm) heard about the trouble. He quickly called soldiers and guards, and they ran to the Temple and stopped the people beating Paul. Rather than set him free they arrested him and took him to the Roman barracks, having to carry him part of the way because of the crowd. Outside the barracks Paul asked to speak to the crowd and was allowed to do so. He explained to them how he had become a follower of Jesus. But he also told them that God had told him to spread the light of Christ to the Gentiles. When he said this the crowd became angry and started shouting so the Tribune took him to safety in the barracks.

The next day the Jewish leaders came before the Tribune to accuse Paul, but they disagreed amongst themselves when Paul talked about believing in the resurrection of the dead. That night Jesus spoke to Paul and told him that he would tell others about him in Rome as well as Jerusalem.

The next day some people planned to capture and kill Paul, but Paul's nephew reported this to the tribune so Paul was sent at night, with a large guard, to Felix the Roman Governor in Caesarea.

Felix had already heard about "The Way", as the faith of Christians was described. When



Paul before Festus and Agrippa by Nikolai Bodarevsky (1850-1921).

Jewish leaders travelled to Caesarea to accuse Paul the Governor sent them away but left Paul under arrest, though not locked up, for two years!

Then Festus then became Governor and Jewish leaders again accused Paul and argued the case should be held in Jerusalem. Paul denied the charges but seeing the danger of a trial in Jerusalem he used his right as a Roman citizen to appeal to Cesar, which was granted.

Paul was then invited to speak to both Festus and King Agrippa and he told them both about how he became

a follower of Jesus and about what the followers of Christ believe. The King said Paul had done nothing wrong and should be freed but as he had appealed to Caesar he should be sent to Rome to stand trial. Paul seems to have realised that if he had been set free he would be in danger. But instead he got free travel to Rome and the opportunity to share the message about Jesus with many more people.

“I stand, witnessing ... that the Christ ... would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” (v22-23)



Paul thought he might die, but Jesus had other plans and Paul would be able to spread the light to many more people.