

~FESTUS (113)

(Fes'tus) [from Latin, Festal, Joyful]

- Governor of the Roman province of Judea after the recall of Felix to Rome.
- But, when two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius **Festus**, and because Felix desired to gain favor with the Jews, he left Paul bound. ([Acts of Apostles 24:27](#))
- The year of this change in governor's is not definitely known, the only sources of information are the Bible and Josephus, and neither sheds light on the appointment by Nero.
- There are two schools of critics, one arguing for the arrival of Porcius **Festus** in Judea as early as **54 C.E.**, the other as late as 61 C.E.,
- Historians tend to favor a time between **58 C.E. and 61 C.E.** The year **58 C.E.**, as given by [Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible \(p. 342\)](#), seems to be the most likely date of **Festus** accession as governor of Judea.
- Three days after **Festus** arrived in Caesarea he journeyed to Jerusalem, evidently to familiarize himself with the problems of the people he was to govern. Paul was in Caesarea, left over as a prisoner from the administration of Felix.
- The Jewish chief priests and principal men wasted no time in requesting that he be brought to Jerusalem, as they hoped to ambush him and kill him on the way.
- Instead, Festus decided on a retrial for Paul and ordered the accusers to appear before his judgment seat in Caesarea. After the trial Festus was convinced of Paul's innocence and later confessed to King Agrippa II. I perceived he had committed nothing deserving of death.
- But I perceived he had committed nothing deserving of death. So when this man himself appealed to the August One, I decided to send him. ([Acts of Apostles 25:25](#))

- Earlier, desiring to gain favor with the Jews, **Festus** had asked if Paul would volunteer to go to Jerusalem for trial.
- **Festus**, desiring to gain favor with the Jews, said in reply to Paul; Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and be judged there before me concerning these things? ([Acts of Apostles 25:9](#))
- Paul, however, replied:
- If, on the one hand, I am really a wrongdoer and have committed anything deserving of death, I do not beg off from dying, if, on the other hand, none of those things exists of which these men accuse me, no man can hand me over to them as a favor. I appeal to Caesar! ([Acts of Apostles 25:11](#))
- Now **Festus** was faced with a new problem. In explaining to Agrippa that he had this prisoner to send to Rome, yet had no charges to lay against him, **Festus** observed:
- For it seems unreasonable to me to send a prisoner and not also to signify the charges against him. ([Acts of Apostles 25:27](#))
- Agrippa offered to hear Paul himself with a view to resolving the problem. In his defense, Paul made such an eloquent and stirring speech that **Festus** was moved to exclaim;
- Now as he was saying these things in his defense, **Festus** said in a loud voice; You are going mad, Paul! Great learning is driving you into madness! ([Acts of Apostles 26:24](#))
- Paul then turned to Agrippa with a strong appeal, eliciting Agrippa's remark;
- But Agrippa said to Paul; In a short time you would persuade me to become a Christian. ([Acts of Apostles 26:28](#))
- Later Agrippa said to **Festus**; This man could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar. This decision was entirely providential, for the Lord beforehand had disclosed to Paul;
- But the following night the Lord stood by him and said; Be of good courage! For as you have been giving a thorough witness on the things about me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness in Rome. ([Acts of Apostles 23:11](#))

- Moreover, Agrippa said to **Festus**; This man could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar. (**Acts of Apostles 26:32**)
- In comparison with the oppressive administration of Felix, that of **Festus** is rated as being generally favorable. He suppressed the terrorist bandits known as the Assassins, or *Sicarii*, or dagger men, and in other ways tried to uphold Roman law.
- One ruling of Festus, however, was reversed on appeal to Rome. Agrippa built his dining room overlooking the sacred temple area, whereupon the Jews constructed a wall to obstruct the view.
- Festus ordered that the wall be removed on the grounds that it blocked out the view of the soldiers, but when the case was appealed to Rome the wall was allowed to stand. Festus died in office and was succeeded by Albinus.