

## Almost Persuaded

---

by David Padfield

For two years Porcius Festus held Paul prisoner in Caesarea Maritima. When Felix succeeded Festus, *“the high priest and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they petitioned him asking a favor against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem -- while they lay in ambush along the road to kill him”* (Acts 25:2-3).

Unaware of the plot to kill Paul, Festus asked him if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem to be judged. Paul responded by saying, *“I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar.”* (Acts 25:10-11)

By exercising his right as a Roman citizen, Paul appealed his case to Augustus Caesar. While waiting for a ship to take Paul to Rome, Festus asked King Agrippa to help him *“specify the charges”* against Paul (Acts 25:27). Agrippa, the great-grandson of Herod the Great, had been appointed ruler of Abilene, part of Galilee, Iturea and Trachonitis by the Roman Emperor Claudius.

King Agrippa permitted Paul to freely speak concerning the charges made against him by the Jews. Luke records the moving sermon Paul preached to Agrippa in the twenty-sixth chapter of the book of Acts.

While speaking of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, Paul was interrupted by Festus and accused of being *“beside”* himself (Acts 26:24). Luke then records these words of Paul: *“I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.”* (Acts 26:25-27). Agrippa uttered one brief sentence in reply to Paul. He said, *“You **almost** persuade me to become a Christian”* (Acts 26:28).

One of the saddest words heard at the judgment will be the bitter cry of *“almost.”* To *“almost”* be a Christian is to be a child of Satan. To *“almost”* repent of your sins is to die in your sins. To *“almost”* be saved is to be eternally lost. To *“almost”* go to heaven is to be sent to hell. *“Almost cannot avail; almost is but to fail; sad, sad, that bitter wail -- almost, but lost.”*

282601