

December 1, 1928

Coming back now to the lesson we had this morning and continuing this thing of Paul's trial. Here is a person figuratively speaking that has a bill of indictment brought against him. He has been a prisoner now for two years and he has not had a trial yet that would either convict him or give him his freedom. That is a long time for a person to be a prisoner without being convicted.

There is a change in the government, a new person comes in and so the case is revived. They could not get anything done by the last Roman officer so they try the new one. They ask to have Paul tried. Evidently Festus has been informed that the prisoner would not be safe so he refuses to bring him to Jerusalem to be tried. He says that he is going down to Caesarea and if they will come there and bring their witnesses he will have the trial. He sits on the judgment seat and calls it to order and has Paul brought in. The accusations are never established. The judge is not convinced at all that he is guilty of the things he is accused of. Neither against the laws of the Jews or the temple of the Jews or Caesar himself. Being a Roman citizen, his word had more weight than that of an ordinary man. But the judge Festus, the Roman officer in order to appease these Jews who are terribly wrought up about this man, looking at it from a Roman officer's standpoint asked Paul if he wanted to go to the Jews to be tried. They had a conspiracy to seize him and kill him. Paul said that he ought to be tried before the Roman government. He appealed to Caesar. In other words, he appealed his case from the Roman governor to the supreme court to be held in Rome. He appealed to Caesar. Paul was within his rights and Festus knew he was so Festus says to him that he has appealed to Caesar so to Caesar he shall go. A good riddance. No longer will he, Festus,

be worried with this Jew who has stirred up so much trouble.

If you remember some years before this Paul was told in a vision that he would carry the gospel back to Rome. It has been a long time and he has not gone to Rome yet but he has made his plea to the supreme court. Now he must get up his case.

You know in the courts of America today a person may be brought in before a magistrate and if found guilty he can appeal to the county court (if they have a county court, this county does) and from that to the state superior court and if not satisfied with that he may appeal to the court of the United States.

We see Paul taken by the Jews, the Roman government reaching down and protecting him and trying him under the Roman law. Then they let him go back and be tried by the Jews, then he was brought in and tried before the governor of that district and the Roman governor asked if he wanted to go back to the Jews to be tried by the Jews and he said no that he had appealed to the court of the empire that was held in the city of Rome.

He is having a hard time saving his life but he is smart. Paul is one of the best educated men of his time. A person who is started out in the strictest sect of the Jews, the Pharisees, converted from the religion of the Pharisees to this Jesus who had been persecuted and killed and then he had gone about Asia Minor and a part of Europe teaching them this new religion and gone back to the Jews and they determined to put him to death because of the damage he has done to the Jewish religion and then he is taken to Rome and there under the reign of Nero probably he was put to death.

---Robert H. Wright, President