

# Acts 25:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar.

## Analysis

**But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus—** Paul invoked his right as a Roman citizen to appeal to the emperor. The verb ἐπικαλεσαμένου (epikalesamenou, 'having appealed to') is a technical legal term. **Augustus** (Σεβαστός, Sebastos, the Greek equivalent of Latin Augustus, 'revered one') was the imperial title; Nero was emperor at this time (AD 59-60). The phrase τηρηθῆναι εἰς τὴν τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ διάγνωσιν (tērēthēnai eis tēn tou Sebastou diagnōsin, 'to be kept for the examination/decision of Augustus') indicates Paul requested imperial jurisdiction.

**I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar—** Once appeal was made, Festus had no choice. The imperative ἐκέλευσα τηρεῖσθαι αὐτόν (ekeleusa tēreisthai auton, 'I ordered him to be kept') maintains Paul in protective custody until transport to Rome. This appeal fulfilled Jesus's prophecy that Paul would testify in Rome (Acts 23:11) and opened the door for gospel proclamation in the empire's capital.

## Historical Context

The right of appeal (provocatio) to Caesar was a fundamental privilege of Roman citizenship, established by the Lex Julia. Any citizen could appeal a provincial governor's decision, especially in capital cases. Once appealed, the case was transferred to the emperor's jurisdiction. This process took months—gathering

evidence, securing transport, scheduling the hearing. Paul's appeal removed him from both Jewish threats and Festus's political maneuvering, placing him under imperial protection. It also guaranteed his journey to Rome at Roman expense, with legal status protecting him along the way.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does Paul's appeal to Caesar demonstrate strategic use of legal rights to advance God's purposes—is this faith or presumption?
2. What does Paul's willingness to appeal to a pagan emperor teach about God's sovereignty over earthly rulers and legal systems?
3. In what ways did Paul's Roman citizenship and legal appeal function as divine providence preparing the way for the gospel in Rome?

## Interlinear Text

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τοῦ δὲ Παύλου ἐπικαλεσαμένου τηρεῖσθαι αὐτὸν εἰς  
G3588 **But** when Paul had appealed to be kept him unto  
G1161 G3972 G1941 G5083 G846 G1519

τὴν τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ διάγνωσιν ἐκέλευσα τηρεῖσθαι αὐτὸν  
G3588 G3588 of Augustus the hearing I commanded to be kept him  
G4575 G1233 G2753 G5083 G846

ἔως οὖ πέμψω αὐτὸν πρὸς Καίσαρα  
till G3739 I might send him to Caesar  
G2193 G3992 G846 G4314 G2541