

Acts 25:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.

Analysis

And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp—The scene is spectacular: μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας (meta pollēs phantasias, 'with much pageantry, display, spectacle'). Agrippa and Bernice arrive in full royal regalia—a theatrical entrance designed to display power and majesty. The contrast is deliberate: worldly pomp versus Paul's imprisoned simplicity, yet Paul has the greater message and authority.

And was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city—The akroatērion (ἀκροατήριον, 'audience chamber, hearing room') fills with χιλιάρχοις (chiliarchois, 'military tribunes, commanders') and ἔξοχοῖς ἀνδράσιν (exochois andrasin, 'prominent men, leaders') of Caesarea. **At Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth**—the prisoner enters this gathering of power and prestige. Yet Acts records none of their words, only Paul's testimony. Human pomp fades; gospel truth endures.

Historical Context

Caesarea Maritima was Herod the Great's showcase capital, with a magnificent palace that served as the Roman procurator's residence. The audience chamber was designed to impress—marble columns, mosaics, symbols of Roman power.

Agrippa's entrance would include trumpets, guards, and ceremonial protocol befitting royalty. The gathering represented the three power structures of first-century Palestine: Roman government (Festus, tribunes), Jewish royalty (Agrippa), and local aristocracy (principal men). Paul stands before all three as a prisoner in chains, yet his message will outlast their kingdoms.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the contrast between worldly pomp and gospel simplicity challenge our own attraction to spectacle over substance in worship?
2. What does this scene teach about the temporary nature of human power and pageantry compared to the eternal weight of gospel testimony?
3. In what ways might contemporary Christianity sometimes emphasize presentation and pomp over the simple, powerful proclamation of Christ?

Interlinear Text

Τῇ οὖν ἐπαύριον ἐλθόντος τοῦ Ἀγρίππα καὶ τῆς
G3588 when And on the morrow G1887 was come G3588 Agrippa and G3588
G3767 G1887 G2064 G67 G2532

Βερνίκης μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας καὶ εἰσελθόντων εἰς
Bernice with great pomp and was entered into
G959 G3326 G4183 G5325 G2532 G1525 G1519

τὸ ἀκροατήριον σύν τε τοῖς χιλιάρχοις καὶ
G3588 the place of hearing with G5037 G3588 the chief captains and
G201 G4862 G5506 G2532

ἀνδράσιν τοῖς κατ' ἔξοχὴν οὖσιν τῆς πόλεως καὶ
men G3588 G2596 principal of G3588 the city and
G435 G1851 G5607 G4172 G2532

κελεύσαντος τοῦ Φήστου ἦχθη ὁ Παῦλος
commandment G3588 Festus was brought forth G3588 Paul
G2753 G5347 G71 G3972

Additional Cross-References

Acts 25:13 (Parallel theme): And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus.

Acts 26:30 (Parallel theme): And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: