

ACTS CHAPTER 24 – PAUL’S DEFENSE BEFORE FELIX

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: <http://www.missioncalvary.com/> Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

ACCUSED OF SEDITION– VS. 1-9

Act 24:1 Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator named Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul.

Act 24:2 And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: "Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight,

Act 24:3 we accept it always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

Act 24:4 Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us.

Act 24:5 For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

Act 24:6 He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law.

Act 24:7 But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took him out of our hands,

Act 24:8 commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him."

Act 24:9 And the Jews also assented, maintaining that these things were so.

v. 1 The accusers didn't waste time. They came down after five days in order to press charges against Paul. They brought with them a man named Tertullus who would act as the prosecuting attorney. He was a clever and well-prepared man. The charge he brought was very well prepared, too. It was brief and to the point. I think he did the best he could with the charges he had.

v. 2 He starts out with flattery in his address to Felix. This had nothing in the world to do with the charge against Paul

v. 3. Notice how he is buttering up the governor.

v. 4 He calls Paul a mover of sedition. He couldn't prove that, of course.

v. 5 The "Jews" are the religious rulers who came down to press charges.

vs. 6-7 Notice he makes subtle insinuations about the way the chief captain handled the case. He cannot charge him with dereliction of duty, but there is a faint breath of criticism to the governor. He says the Jews could have handled this case adequately themselves. He has nothing but flattery for Felix, unjust charges against Paul, and subtle insinuations against Claudius Lysias.

vs. 8-9 So the charges against Paul are that he is a mover of sedition, he is a leader of a rebellious sect, and he has profaned the temple. Tertullus presents these charges for the religious rulers. Now Paul makes his defense before Felix, **Mt. 5:10-12** *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [11] 'Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. [12] Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Jerusalem and Rome were the centers of two enormously strong power blocs. The faith of Jerusalem went back two millennia to Abraham. The rule of Rome extended some three million square miles around the Mediterranean Sea. The combined might of Jerusalem and Rome was overwhelming. If a solitary dissident like Paul were to set himself against them, the outcome would be inevitable. His chances of survival would resemble those of a butterfly before a steamroller. He would be crushed, utterly obliterated from the face of the earth.

But we see the sovereign hand of God continuing to work in Paul's life. First He uses Rome to get Paul out of the plan of death, which the Jews had plotted. Then he will eventually have Paul appeal to Caesar and with get Paul to Rome, according to God's ways and timing!

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OBSERVATION

THE DEFENSE BEFORE FELIX– VS. 10-21

Act 24:10 Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered: "Inasmuch as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself,

Act 24:11 because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship.

Act 24:12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city.

Act 24:13 Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me.

Act 24:14 But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.

Act 24:15 I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

Act 24:16 This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

Act 24:17 "Now after many years (4yrs.) I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation,

Act 24:18 in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor with tumult.

Act 24:19 They ought to have been here before you to object if they had anything against me.

Act 24:20 Or else let those who are here themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council,

Act 24:21 unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.' "

INTERPRETATION

vs. 10-11 Paul is saying that he is delighted to present his case before Felix. He knows that Felix has been a judge of the people for a long time, which means that Felix understands their customs. So what Paul is going to say will not be something that will be strange or foreign to Felix.

vs. 12-14 Since Felix understands the customs of the Jews, Paul tells him that he went up to Jerusalem to worship according to their custom. In substance he says, "I am in agreement with my nation. Only I must confess that the way in which I worship God is to them heresy." But Paul makes it clear that the way he worships is according to the message to the fathers, that is, the Old Testament.

v. 15 Have you noticed that the Resurrection is the very center of Christianity? It has been from the very beginning, friend. "What think ye of Christ?" is always the test. Did He die for your sins? Was He raised from the dead? Paul immediately comes to the core: the Resurrection.

v. 16 Paul testifies that what he has done, he has done for the sake of his conscience.

v. 17 Paul came to bring to the church in Jerusalem the gifts which he had been gathering on his third missionary journey. I have a notion it was a substantial gift which the gentile believers sent to Jerusalem, and Paul wanted to bring that gift with his own hands.

vs. 18-19 The real accusers, if there were any at all, are not even present. The charge that Tertullus makes is that Paul had been stirring up people in the temple. Why don't the people who were being stirred up testify against Paul? They aren't there, and Paul calls attention to it. **(Acts 19:33-34; 2 Tim. 4:14)**

v. 20 "Let them tell you about my appearance before the Sanhedrin. Did they find that I had done anything evil? Let them give testimony about that."

v. 21 He tells Felix again that the real issue is the Resurrection. The Resurrection is the very heart of the gospel message. Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised again on the third day. In fact, I think of Christianity as an arch supported by two pillars. One pillar is the death of Christ and the other pillar is the resurrection of Christ. Without one or the other the arch would fall.

APPLICATION

v. 15 - There is going to be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. Now this is mentioned in Daniel, chapter twelve (**Daniel 12:2-3**) where Daniel speaks there of the last days, this general resurrection of the dead. Some to everlasting life and some to everlasting shame and contempt. So Paul said they allow this. In the Jewish faith, they allowed the belief in the resurrection of the dead and of this judgment that is going to come.

v. 24 - Drusilla, who was Jewish, was a daughter of Herod Agrippa I. Now Herod Agrippa I is the one who stretched out his hand against the church and had James, the brother of John killed. When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he arrested Peter. He was going to bring him forth and kill him the next day, but the angel of the Lord came at night and delivered Peter out of the prison. Herod had the guards put to death. He went back down to Caesarea and shortly thereafter died. The Bible says the angel smote and he died. So this is the daughter of Herod Agrippa I and a granddaughter of Herod Antipas, who had John the Baptist beheaded. So her brother is Herod Agrippa II. You will come across him as you read chapter twenty five. In our next chapter, Herod Agrippa II comes into the picture. So Felix came with his wife Drusilla. Now she was an extremely beautiful woman. And as we have mentioned she had been the wife of another man, Aziz who was the king of Emasa. So she is living in open adultery with Felix. This is his third wife. They are living just an open, adulterous life. Tacitus the Roman centurion said of him that he was licentious. That he was evil. And that he exercised all the prerogatives of king with a spirit of a slave.), *he sent for Paul* (He was no doubt curious and interested in Christianity, in this Way.) *and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.* Paul shared with him his belief and his faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

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FELIX PROCRASTINATES– VS. 22-27

Act 24:22 But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of the Way, he adjourned the proceedings and said, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case."

Act 24:23 So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let him have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him.

Act 24:24 And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

Act 24:25 Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."
Act 24:26 Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him.

Act 24:27 But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound.

INTERPRETATION

v. 22 Felix had been hearing about "that way"; he knew the death and resurrection of Christ was being preached. He realized that Paul was the expert, that Paul was the man who could tell him all about it. So he deferred the Jews because he wanted to have another hearing with Paul about this matter. He told the Jews he would wait until Lysias could come down, and then he could get the real story about what had happened to Paul. Apparently he could make no decision from the contradictory testimony that was offered here. Tertullus was making certain accusations. Paul said the real issue was the Resurrection. So he defers judgment.

v. 23 Actually, Felix should have freed Paul. However, he was a politician, an astute politician. He does give Paul a great deal of liberty while still keeping him a prisoner.

v. 24 And after Paul had been kept some days in this gentle confinement at Cesarea, Felix, who had been absent for a short time, coming thither again, with Drusilla, his wife - The daughter of Herod Agrippa, one of the finest women of that age. Felix persuaded her to forsake her husband, Azizus, king of Emessa, and to be married to himself, though a heathen. She was afterward, with a son she had by Felix, consumed in an eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Concerning the faith in Christ - That is, the doctrine of Christ.

vs. 25-26 He was a clever politician and also a crook, by the way. He hoped that he would be bribed and then he would have let Paul go free. (2. Cor. 5:10-11 2Co 5:10) *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 2Co 5:11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.*
– God is going to judge sin! (Heb. 10:26-31) What boldness from Paul to this wicked Roman leader!

v. 27 Felix played politics to the very end. He left Paul in prison. Again we say that Roman justice was no better than the men who executed it. Either Paul was guilty or he was not guilty. If guilty of treason, he should have been put to death. If not guilty, he should have been freed. One or the other should have been done. Under no circumstances should he have been left in prison for two years.

APPLICATION

v. 25 - So Paul testified to Felix -- Felix, there is a day of judgment that is going to come. You have not been living a righteous life. You've been very intemperate. You've indulged yourself in all kinds of evil. And it's going to catch up with you, Felix. There is day of judgment coming. And Felix trembled. Quite often under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, a person begins to tremble.

Felix was shaking. But again he put it off. The pattern of the man. Indecision. Deferring the decision. Putting off the decision. So just being convicted by the Spirit, even having a powerful experience of shaking under the conviction, does not guarantee conversion. **It takes an acting upon that conviction to bring conversion.** And that's the step that Felix couldn't take. **Convicted? Yes. Trembling? Yes. Conversion? No. He put it off.**

And so he said, *and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."* When it's more convenient. Go your way now. When it's more convenient, I'll call you again. **Putting off, deferring again the important decision about his own life.** And how many people have made this same mistake that was made by Felix in putting off the decision to commit their lives to Jesus Christ? **When that moment had come, when that hour of God's Spirit was there, they put it off!** And **with Felix the convenient time never came. Tragic! It never came.** And so it is true of so many people who have put off that decision for Jesus Christ, waiting for a more convenient day. Only to discover that they sinned away the day of grace. And **that more convenient day never came! Hell is filled with people who decided to wait for a more convenient day**

v. 27 Felix was brought back to Rome and there the accusations of his mismanagement were made. His corruption was revealed. And he would have been sentenced to death because of his corrupting of the Roman government, but his brother Pallas interceded. He was a close friend of Nero. Thus his life was spared, but only because of his brother's close relationship to Nero. But he was banished. End of the story for Felix. **The convenient day never came. .**

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THERE IS A FOUNTAIN FILLED WITH BLOOD – **London Fox Singers**

1. There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from
Emmanuel’s veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty
stains.
Lose all their guilty stains, lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty
stains.
2. The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he, washed all my sins away.
Washed all my sins away, washed all my sins away;
And there may I, though vile as he, washed all my sins away.
3. Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood shall never lose its
power
Till all the ransomed church of God be saved, to sin no more.
Be saved, to sin no more, be saved, to sin no more;
Till all the ransomed church of God be saved, to sin no more.
4. E’er since, by faith, I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds
supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.
And shall be till I die, and shall be till I die;
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.
5. When this poor lisping, stammering tongue Lies silent in
the grave,
Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I’ll sing Thy power to save:
I’ll sing Thy power to save, I’ll sing Thy power to save;
Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I’ll sing Thy power to save.

Questions:

1. v. 16. Here again we see Paul is able to
say, *“I have a clear conscience toward God
and men”* Can you say that?
2. V. 22 Felix was an evil, immoral, cruel,
wicked man who was always deferring
making a decision.-putting off decisions.
Can you see how procrastination is one of
Satan’s most effective weapons? Are you
praying for someone in this situation right
now?
3. Act 24:22 *But when Felix heard these
things, having more accurate knowledge of
the Way, - what do you think “having a
more accurate knowledge of the Way”
means?*
4. Do you think Paul is the writer of the
Book of Hebrews? If so, any idea when he
may have written it?
5. In verse 25, what three essential areas of
witness did Paul include in reasoning with
Felix?
6. In your telling others about the Lord in
the coming days, will you remember Paul’s
boldness in including God’s judgment-the
consequence of sin- to Felix, at the risk of
losing his own life?
7. What does 2Co 5:11a mean to you? --
*“Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord,
we persuade men;”*