

## Acts Chapter 24

---

- Paul had been rescued / arrested by the Romans, saving him from the Jews on two separate occasions. The Jews had kind of a trial set up as he was questioned by the High Council, the Sanhedrin - but had to be rescued from their midst.
  - I thought the highlight was when Paul called the high priest a white washed tomb, an unclean man.
  - Paul got wind of another murder plot while in Roman custody. 40 men had taken a vow not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. As Claudius Lysias was informed of that he sent Paul along with a contingent of cavalry and infantry to Felix, the Governor, in Caesarea so that he could decide Paul's fate. The Jewish council and High Priest would also be summoned to explain their accusations.
  - This is all fine and well, but Jesus had already informed Paul that he would testify in Rome about Jesus - so one way or another, that is where he is headed.
- 

V: 1-3 So 5 days after Paul arrives in Caesarea, Ananias the high priest also arrives / "descended" with his attorney, Tertullus. (Triple hardened, liar, imposter)

- At this point Ananias is somewhere around 80 years old, the 60 mile trip to Caesarea could not have been an easy one, it just points out the lengths they were willing to go to to see Paul killed.
- "Descended" - going to Jerusalem is always going "up" or "ascending." Going away is always going down or "descending." You wouldn't think Ananias could go any lower, but there it is.
- Tertullus immediately begins to butter Felix up with flattery.

**Proverbs 26:28** "A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin."

- Felix is generally described as a deviant character. He was a former slave promoted by Nero to be governor, the only time this happened in Roman history. He was also later deposed by Nero for his poor management, but here we see this dishonest man praising Felix because he wants something from him.

**Proverbs 19:10** "Delight is not seemly for a fool; much less for a servant to have rule over princes."

- Felix puts life and breath into this proverb. He was a despicable character, living in open adultery with Drusilla. As we'll read in our passage he was very open to being bribed, and thus got along with the high priest and council pretty well.
- So Tertullus starts out describing what a great man and leader Felix is - bear in mind that praise is coming from an attorney... (470 men to escort Paul?)

V: 4-9 Paul is described as a "pestilent" fellow - A spreader of disease. In this case the disease of "sedition" or rebellion against Rome.

- Sedition or rebellion against Rome was something that Rome was very sensitive to, and dealt with violently.
- Paul is also described as a "ring leader" of the sect of the "Nazarenes".
- Jesus was often identified as "Jesus of Nazareth" to distinguish Him from all the other men named Jesus / Joshua - a very popular name honoring one of the heroes of Judaism.
- Paul is also accused of profaning the Temple, by bringing a Gentile into it - which he did not do, neither of which meant anything to the Romans, but he goes on to describe how they were going to take care of this matter and execute Paul when they were interrupted by Claudius Lysias.

"6... *according to our law.*" - Not even a little bit! They were lawless in every sense of the word!

- In a back handed way they also accuse Claudius Lysias of "police brutality"
- Then they were ordered to appear before Felix and now here they are. Notice that Tertullus and the Jews make some general accusations but don't say anything or offer any proof to substantiate their allegations, they just make the allegations.

V: 10-13 Paul is asked to step forward and give a defense, or answer to the charges.

- Paul acknowledges Felix as the judge, with whom Paul is familiar. Paul declares that he's only been in town twelve days, six of which have been spent in jail.
- It is interesting to note that just 12 days prior Agibus the prophet had declared:

**Acts 21:11** "And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hand of the Gentiles."

- They didn't find him doing anything in the Temple except for worshipping and offering sacrifices; and they can't prove any of the allegations they've made.

V: 14 He does confess however to being a Christian, a follower of Jesus. He does worship in a way that they refer to as heresy, but he is worshipping the God of his fathers - believing all things written in the Law and in the prophets.

- To truly be a Christian we pretty much have to make the same kind of confession or come to the same understanding that we believe that the inspired word of God is true, that we believe it all, not that we necessarily understand it all, but that we believe it all.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** “<sup>16</sup>All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, and for correction, for instruction in righteousness: <sup>17</sup>That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

- Paul is saying that he believes the whole counsel of God, which at that times was the Law and the Prophets; he's saying he also believes the parts of the bible that they don't - meaning the portions of scripture that describe the Messiah's suffering, death, and resurrection which were generally rejected by the Jews.

**Isaiah 53:3-12** [Turn to: read](#)

V: 15 Paul further states that in his hope towards God, he also believes in the resurrection of the dead, both the just to be with the Lord, and the un-just, the wicked unto eternal judgment.

- Paul alludes to the theological argument between the Sadducees and the Pharisees which disagree on the resurrection of the dead, which is part of why he is there, he'll say it again in verse 21.
- As he describes that there will be a resurrection of the dead he's beginning to witness to Felix stating that there is also a coming judgment of sin.

**Daniel 12:2** “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

V: 16 Because of that, knowing that there will be a judgment Paul is watching his P's and Q's.

- He says he exercises, he works, he disciplines himself to have a clear conscious, void or empty of offence towards God, and towards men.
- It's the same basic statement that he made before the Sanhedrin, for which Ananias had him slapped:

**Acts 23:1** "... I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."

- That's our desire as well, that is what Paul exhorts us to:

**Ephesians 5:15-17** "<sup>15</sup>See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, <sup>16</sup>redeeming the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup>Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

V: 17-21 Paul testifies that he'd been away for many years and had come back to bring a gift to the nation (his collection from the churches of Asia and Greece) when certain Jews that recognized him found him in the Temple, worshipping and offering sacrifices, not stirring up any crowds or suggesting any kind of sedition.

- If these accusations are true, where are those who saw these things, where are the Jews who initially confronted Paul, where are the witnesses?
- <sup>19</sup>Under Roman law, every man had a right to face his accusers - So Paul asks, where are they?
- His accusers should have been present, true enough - but what about the men who sent him to the Temple in the first place? What about James and the church leaders? Wasn't this all their idea? There has been no mention of them.
- Can any of the men before him now describe what evil he has done?
- The only thing he is guilty of is believing in the resurrection of the dead, a religious issue as opposed to a political one.
- Paul is pretty much pointing out the obvious that there is no case here and this should be dismissed or dropped at this point.
- At this point Felix knows that Paul is in the right, but there are other forces at work here behind the scenes.

V: 22 Felix defers his decision until he can speak with or hear Claudius Lysias for himself, being perhaps the only impartial witness to these events.

V: 23 Felix places Paul under a liberal form of house arrest within his palace, allowing him visitors and support.

V: 24-26 After some time Felix and "his wife" Drusilla, who wasn't his wife, she was the wife of another man - they were living in open adultery, Felix called for Paul.

- The Roman historian, Tacitus, was very critical of Felix. He said that "Felix exercised the prerogatives of a king with the spirit of a slave."

- He rules with a mixture of cruelty, lust, and servility. He was notoriously wicked. His name later became a byword for wickedness, and thought himself at liberty to commit every sort of crime with impunity. He'd been the governor over Judaea for 5 years at this point, two years later the Roman senate would remove him from power.
- Drusilla was the great granddaughter of Herod the Great; granddaughter of Herod Antipas, who ordered the death of John the Baptist, and the daughter of Herod Agrippa I, the one who wore a silver garment made a great oration in Acts 12 allowing the people to worship him as a god. He dies a horrible death as the angel of the Lord strikes him, being eaten of worms.
- Considering that her great grandfather ordered the death of the Jewish children in Rama Bethlehem, that her grandfather beheaded John the Baptist who was speaking truth about his adultery, which Drusilla was currently engaged in, and that her father was personally stricken by the Lord with worm death - she didn't have too good a family history.
- She was married to another man, Azizus, the priest-king of Emesa in Syria.
- Later, Paul will stand before Agrippa, her brother - and Paul will say:

**Acts 26:26** “For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.”

- Paul described the Christian faith, describing the righteous requirements of God, the need for temperance, and of the judgment to come - all of which sent chills down Felix's spine.
- More than likely Paul had been quoting scriptures to them about the judgment to come, trying to reason with them.

Paul might have taken them to the proverbs:

**Proverbs 1:24-32** Turn to: read

- Whatever Paul said; “Felix trembled,” he was literally shaking, he was impacted, the Holy Spirit was doing something in his heart, for a moment Felix's eyes were opened to the horrible truth about how he had been living - but just as quickly he dismissed it, he rejected it - rejecting the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

**2 Corinthians 7:10** “Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

- Felix couldn't bare any more and sent Paul away saying that when it was convenient he would send for him again.

- This is a common tactic of the enemy, procrastination, think about it later, deal with it later. There's no hurry.

**2 Corinthians 6:2** "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

**Isaiah 55:6** "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near."

- The Bible doesn't record that a more convenient time ever came. When is it convenient to be confronted about our sin? Paul was brought before Felix on other occasions but there is no record of their conversation, or of Felix's conversion.
- Felix was not so much interested in turning his life around and getting right with God as much as he was interested in squeezing Paul for a bribe to let him go.
- Given that the Jews didn't really have a case and that Paul should have been released based on the merit of the case; the Jews were probably bribing Felix to condemn Paul and perhaps Felix was looking for a bidding war.

V: 27 Fast forward 2 years and Festus comes into the picture, who replaces Felix - comes into his room or place.

- Felix wanting to earn favor with the Jews kept Paul locked up instead of releasing him.
- What Felix didn't know was that the Jews had been writing letters and sending messengers to Nero complaining about Felix, he was never going to earn their favor. Felix was then recalled to Rome and dealt with.
- Secular history records a lot about these individuals. Felix lived out the rest of his life in disgrace in Rome; Drusilla was 19 years old when these events unfolded, and two years later she was killed in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius at the age of 21.
- Paul was an active man, always on the move, but God had him cooling his jets in Caesarea for two years, waiting on the Lord, the Lord's timing.
- He's witnessed to Felix, he'll get to witness to Festus and to Herod Agrippa - the most powerful men in the region, then he'll get an all expense paid trip to Rome where he'll witness to Nero himself.