

“Are You Waiting For A More Convenient Time?”

Acts 24:1-27

Message by Michael J. Barnard

August 18, 2024

Teaching Aim: To examine the circumstances surrounding Paul’s initial hearing before Governor Felix of Judea. To understand the charges being brought against Paul by the Jews and their attorney Tertullus. To hear Paul’s defense and recognize the importance he places upon the doctrine of the resurrection. To realize Paul did nothing that warranted his arrest or imprisonment. To understand the historical significance of Felix and his wife Drusilla as well as the reason for Felix’s removal from office.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: False accusations brought by the Jews against the Apostle Paul (Acts 24:1-9)

1. As we concluded **Acts chapter 23**, Claudius Lysias sent the Roman citizen Paul to Caesarea, initially escorted by 470 Roman soldiers to avert a plotted assassination attempt. Upon his arrival at Caesarea, Governor Felix read the brief letter from Claudius Lysias explaining what he had discovered about the Apostle Paul during his initial investigation. Once Governor Felix realized that Paul was from the province of Cilicia, he agreed to hear Paul’s case. What did Felix require of Paul’s accusers? (See **Acts 23:35a**) Where did Felix keep Paul in the interim to keep him safe? (See **Acts 23:35b**)
2. Why did it take five days for the high priest, the elders, and the certain orator (or attorney) named Tertullus to make the 64-mile trip from Jerusalem (**vs. 1**)? What was their purpose in going to Caesarea and speaking to Felix?
3. What can we assume about Tertullus from his name (**vs. 2**)? (See Commentaries) How do we see Tertullus trying to butter up Governor Felix and gain his favor (**vv. 2-3**)? Was Felix really that great of a leader? Was Judea that peaceful under his rule? (See Commentaries)
4. What four charges did Tertullus make against the Apostle Paul in **verses 4-6**? What is a plague? (See Dictionary) How do plagues affect people physically? In this case, how was Paul affecting the people spiritually? Why would the religious leaders call Paul a plague? Note: We live in a day and age where if we are faithful to God’s Word, we will be called a plague by the enemies of the gospel. Have you ever had people upset at you because of what you stand for in Christ? Were you a closet Christian, or did you come out and stand for God’s truth?

5. In **verse 5**, Paul is called “*a ringleader of the Nazarenes*.” This is the only place in the New Testament where Christians were called Nazarenes. Was this a positive or negative statement? How did Nathaniel react when he found out Jesus was from Nazareth? (See **John 1:45-46**) Why did people look down upon those from Nazareth?

6. Notice the change that took place between **Acts 21:27-30** and **Acts 24:6**. What difference do you see specifically between **Acts 21:28** and **Acts 24:6**? According to Tertullus, how did the Jewish religious leaders want to judge Paul? Who stopped them? Who did Tertullus make out to be the bad guy (**vv. 7-8a**)? Is this what really happened? (See **Acts 21:30-33**) What was the real story?

7. Why is it important for us to hear both sides of a story today? (See **Prov. 18:17**) Have you ever had someone twist the truth or flat out lie about you? How did it feel? What did it do to your reputation? Does twisting a story and lying still happen today with our modern news media? How can we keep from being deceived by false stories?

8. What did Tertullus challenge Governor Felix to do in **verses 8b-9**? Who was he blaming? How did the “*religious leaders*” respond to the presentation from Tertullus? Should we trust religious leaders today just because they look the part, or have a degree from some religious institution? What should the standard be for every religious leader? (**Matt. 7:16-20**) Why is it important for us to compare the words and life of religious leaders to Scripture?

Part II: Paul's defense against the false accusations (Acts 24:10-21)

1. What did Paul do once the governor nodded at him (**vs. 10**)? The Jewish religious leaders brought the best attorney they could find. How did Paul respond to the charges that were being leveled against him? What did Paul acknowledge in his opening statement (**vv. 10-11**). Note: Felix had already served as governor of Judea for six years, so he knew something of the Jewish religion.

2. What was Paul's purpose in bringing up the fact that he had only been back in Judea for twelve days? If Paul had already been held in Caesarea for five days, how many days had Paul been in Jerusalem? Was this enough time to cause a major uprising as Pentecost was being celebrated? What had been Paul's main purpose in going to Jerusalem (**vs. 11**)?

3. Paul was not causing any trouble in the temple area (**vv. 12-13**). The truth is, Paul did not take Trophimus of Ephesus into the forbidden temple courts, meaning the Court of the Women or the Court of Israel. What had Paul been doing? (See **Acts 21:17-24**)

4. What did Paul plead guilty of in **verse 14**? Early Christians were often called "*the Way*." Where do most people believe this title came from? (See **John 14:6**)

5. What is a religious sect? (See Dictionary) What explanation did Paul have for this charge? How did the Sadducees and Pharisees differ in their theological beliefs? Which of the two Jewish parties are the beliefs of Christians more in line with? What warning did Jesus have for every Christian? (See **Matt. 5:20**) Where do Christians find their righteousness today?

6. Paul pointed out to Governor Felix that he had remained faithful to all that was written in the law and the prophets (**vs. 14**). What doctrine did Paul specifically mention in **verse 15**? What is meant by "*a double resurrection*?" How do we see a double resurrection in **Dan. 12:1-2**? Is this what the Pharisees believed? The Sadducees? How about Christians?

7. What was Paul's goal in ministry according to **verse 16**? Why should this be our goal as well? What can we learn about Paul's trip to Jerusalem from **verses 17-18**? Paul's mission had been a humanitarian mission bringing financial aid for the needy in Jerusalem. This is the only mention in the Book of Acts of the collection that Paul brought from Asia-Minor and Greece. Here Paul makes note that it was the Jews from Asia who caused the uprising.

8. What was Paul's objection in **verse 19**? Why do you think the Jews from Asia were not with the Jewish leadership in Caesarea? As a Roman citizen, did Paul have the right to face his accusers? Who did Paul challenge in **verse 20**? What divisive issue did Paul acknowledge addressing in Jerusalem (**vs. 21**)? Why would this doctrine be so divisive for the Jews?

Part III: As Paul addressed Felix's sin, Felix procrastinated instead of facing his sin and repenting (Acts 24:22-27)

1. Tertullus had been pointing the finger of guilt at the Roman commander Claudius Lysias. What wise decision did Felix make in **verse 22**? Why was this wiser than taking the Jewish religious leaders at their word? What did Felix command the centurion to do in **verse 23**?
2. Paul had caught Governor Felix's attention by the things that he said. What do we find Felix doing sometime later (**vs. 24**)? Who accompanied Felix during this meeting with Paul? What can we learn about Drusilla in **verse 24** and from searching online? Was Drusilla a good or evil person? Why? Near what famous city did she die? From what?
3. Knowing the background of Felix and Drusilla's relationship, did Paul soften his message any (**vs. 25**)? What three topics did Paul address? Note: Before Felix could understand the good news of the gospel, it was imperative that he understand the bad news of the law. (See **Rom. 3:23**) How did Paul's teaching affect Felix? Why is it important for us not to soften up the message of the Bible? Why do you think so many churches are straying today?
4. How did the frightened Felix respond to Paul's teaching (**vs. 25b**)? Have you ever met people who don't have time for Jesus; they would rather do everything else but address their sin and wait for a more convenient time? Why is this a fatal mistake for many? (See **Jam. 4:13-16**) Does history provide any evidence that Felix and Drusilla ever repented from their sins and received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord? Note: 100 years from now all of us will either be in heaven or in hell, where will you be? On what basis? (See **2 Cor. 6:2**)
5. Did Felix have frequent talks with Paul out of a desire to know Jesus, or did he have another motive (**vs. 26**)? Was bribery legal or illegal in the Roman Empire? What relevant warning did we find Paul giving to the people of Athens in **Acts 17:30-31**? How does this warning relate to Paul's key doctrine of the resurrection? Does this warning still apply to us today?
6. However we choose to look at it, "*Justice delayed is justice denied.*" How do you think Paul spent his time while in custody? How long was Paul in custody for at Caesarea under Felix (**vs. 27**)? Who succeeded Felix? What caused Felix to be removed from his office as governor of Judea? (See Commentaries) How might Felix's way of governance have changed if he had repented and come to faith in Christ? Have you repented from your sin and received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord? If not, why not do so right now in prayer?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Paul used his Roman citizenship to take the gospel to the highest levels of the Roman Empire.
- The Jews brought the best professional attorney they could find; but with God's help, Paul was able to defend himself.
- Enemies of the cross will not hesitate to twist the truth and lie about Christians.
- Regardless of the cost, Christians are to stand for the truth of God and His Word in Christ.
- Today, too many Christians are closet Christians, hiding their faith in Jesus from others.
- Paul would not back down or compromise the things of God, no matter what the cost to him.
- Christianity stands or falls on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Too many unbelievers pass by their opportunity for salvation as they wait for a more convenient time to address their sin and receive Christ.