

Acts Chapter Twenty-Four

Acts 24:1-3

And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders, with a certain attorney *named* Tertullus; and they brought charges to the governor against Paul. And after *Paul* had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying *to the governor*,

“Since we have through you attained much peace, and since by your providence reforms are being carried out for this nation, we acknowledge *this* in every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness.

- The presence of all three groups coming before the governor to press charges— indicates how important a conviction is to them.
- Paul is accused of sedition, rebellion and desecrating the temple
- Tertullus—a skilled attorney—to prosecute—help sway the audience in his direction.
- He begins by flattering Felix (consider Rom 16:18, Jude 1:16—4 times in Proverbs flattery is connected with sexual immorality—Proverbs 20:19, Ps 78:36 (insincere praise is considered flattery).
- In reality—Felix had put down multiple insurrections with great brutality and causing great fear—he had ordered the massacre of thousands of Jews in Caesarea.

Acts 24:4-6

“But, that I may not weary you any further, I beg you to grant us, by your kindness, a brief hearing. “For we have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. “And he even tried to desecrate the temple; and then we arrested him. And we wanted to judge him according to our own Law.

- Tertullus puts Paul in the same category as other insurrectionists of this time period.
- Charges against Paul: he is a pest, stirs up dissension, a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, tried to desecrate the temple.
- This is a strange time period when it comes to the Temple in Jerusalem— between resurrection of Jesus and the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD—the

temple is being fulfilled by the gathering of the church under the Headship of Christ.

- Nazareth had a poor reputation as a city.

Acts 24:7-9

“But Lysias the commander came along, and with much violence took him out of our hands, ordering his accusers to come before you.] And by examining him yourself concerning all these matters, you will be able to ascertain the things of which we accuse him.” And the Jews also joined in the attack, asserting that these things were so.

- Tertullus attempts to put Lysias in a bad light—critical of the way he handled the arrest of Paul.
- Religious leaders among the Jews come down to press charges.
- No evidence is brought forward
- Tertullus hopes Felix will find something wrong as he examines him.

Acts 24:10-15

And when the governor had nodded for him to speak, Paul responded:

“Knowing that for many years you have been a judge to this nation, I cheerfully make my defense, since you can take note of the fact that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. “And neither in the temple, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city *itself* did they find me carrying on a discussion with anyone or causing a riot. “Nor can they prove to you *the charges* of which they now accuse me. “But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law, and that is written in the Prophets; having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

- Paul's defense: he did not do what they claimed.....and he worships the God laid out in the Law and Prophets. He refutes their charges (refutes=to provide a complete and convincing argument against)
- Luke gives summary of Paul's defense before Felix
- This is Paul's second appearance before a Roman governor—1st was Gallio (case was dismissed before he had a chance to speak).
- Resurrection is for the righteous and the wicked

Acts 24:16-21

“In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience *both* before God and before men. “Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings; in which they found me *occupied* in the temple, having been purified, without *any* crowd or uproar. But *there were* certain Jews from Asia— who ought to have been present before you, and to make accusation, if they should have anything against me. “Or else let these men themselves tell what misdeed they found when I stood before the Council, other than for this one statement which I shouted out while standing among them, ‘For the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you today.’”

- All that Paul does—is with a clear conscience—able to stand blameless before God and man
- Alms to my nation—Paul came with a substantial gift for the relief of the poor. Collection was made among the Gentile churches on behalf of their Judean brothers—Gal 2:10, Rom 15:26, II Cor 8:9
- His actual accusers are not present
- Paul states that his actual accusers are not even present—and that when he stood before the council—there was no evil found in him.
- Paul takes the issue that divided his accusers—the Resurrection—and makes it the point here.

Acts 24:22-27

But Felix, having a more exact knowledge about the Way, put them off, saying, “When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case.” And he gave orders to the centurion for him to be kept in custody and *yet* have *some* freedom, and not to prevent any of his friends from ministering to him.

But some days later, Felix arrived with Drusilla, his wife who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him *speak* about faith in Christ Jesus. And as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, “Go away for the present, and when I find time, I will summon you.” At the same time too, he was hoping that money would be given him by Paul; therefore he also used to send for him quite often and converse with him. But after two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and wishing to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul imprisoned.

- Who is Felix: a freed slave who used brutality in his pursuit of leadership—a man given to pleasure and Licentiousness—his name means 'pleasure'—Roman historian Tacitus says, "Through all cruelty and licentiousness he exercised the authority of a king, with the spirit of a slave"
- His wife—Druscilla—daughter of Herod Agrippa I. Her father killed the Apostle James, His father/uncle killed John the Baptist and tried to kill Jesus.
- Felix is aware of 'The Way'—its' claims concerning Christ and His resurrection
- Felix realizes that Paul is a key witness for The Way.
- Paul will be kept in custody—but granted freedom to meet with others.
- Druscilla: sister of Agrippa II—Felix seduced her away from her husband to be his 3rd wife.
- In Paul's second appearance before Felix—he is not defending himself—but sharing about faith in Christ.
- They touch on the topics of righteous, self-control, and the coming judgment (topic of judgment comes up as Paul is presenting the way of salvation)—this man is used to taking a bribe.
- He defers a decision—putting off the Jews—to wait for arrival of Claudius Lysias
- Under Roman law—this type of an offense—could only hold someone for 2 years.
- Felix's actions: from the fear of man.

Acts Chapter Twenty-four—Workbook

Key Words:

Harmonize:

Read Luke 22:66-23:12

Dig:

- 1) What is the first tactic Tertullus takes before Felix?
- 2) Who does Tertullus accuse besides Paul?
- 3) As Tertullus speak about Felix, what might we assume about the governor?
- 4) How were Christians described in verse 5? What is a sect?
- 5) What purpose does Paul give for being in Jerusalem?
- 6) When Paul is given an opportunity to defend himself—what does he choose to speak about?
- 7) When Paul shares later with Felix and Drusilla, what topics does he cover? Why is this important?
- 8) Are there any clues in chapter 24 about the true state of Felix's heart?
- 9) Based on Acts 24—when you consider the Parable of the Soils—what kind of soil is Paul dealing with?

Discuss:

- 1) Is it possible to maintain a blameless conscience before God and men? How is it done?
- 2) If Acts 24:14-16 captures Paul's purpose—do you have a scripture or statement that captures yours?

Point of Prayer:

Pray for someone who is in prison for the cause of Christ.

Integrate:

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

Application:

- 1) Have you ever been in a courtroom for a trial? Was it difficult to discern the true facts of the case?
- 2) Do you know someone who is frequently misunderstood? Do you know why this happens?
- 3) Has someone told a lie about you to others? What was their motive? What was your response?
- 4) Consider what you have done in the last two years—do you get a sense of how long that is when you are confined?
- 5) Have Christians suffered this kind of treatment in our country? When?
- 6) What laws do you depend on to protect you as a Christian?