

ACTS 24

Paul before Governor Felix

Tertullus's Accusation

1 And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a spokesman, one Tertullus. They laid before the governor their case against Paul. 2 And when he had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him saying:

Because through you we enjoy much peace, and because by your foresight, most excellent Felix, reforms are being made for this nation, 3 in every way and everywhere we accept this with all gratitude. 4 But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly. 5 For we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6 He even tried to profane the temple, but we seized him. 8 By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him.¹

9 The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all these things were so.

Paul's Defense

10 And when the governor had nodded to him to speak, Paul replied:

Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense (*ἀπολογέομαι*, pres.). 11 You can verify that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem, 12 and they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, either in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city. 13 Neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me. 14 But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, 15 having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection² of both the just and the unjust. 16 So I always take pains to have a clear conscience³ toward both God and man.

17 Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings. 18 While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or tumult. But some Jews from Asia⁴— 19 they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, should they have anything against me. 20 Or else let these men

¹ Tertullus' argument is seen to be weak. He offers generalities, but there are no specifics.

² Again we see that resurrection is central to Paul's worldview.

³ Paul's clear conscience is a major theme of Acts 13-28.

⁴ Again we see the Ephesian Jews are the primary enemies of Paul.

themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, 21 other than this one thing that I cried out while standing among them:

It is with respect to the resurrection⁵ of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.

22 But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, put them off saying,

When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case.

23 Then he gave orders to the centurion that he should be kept in custody but have some liberty, and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs.

24 After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him about the into-Messiah-Jesus-faith (τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν πίστεως). 25 And as he reasoned (διαλέγομαι, pres. part.) about righteousness (δικαιοσύνη), self-control (ἐγκράτεια), and the coming judgment (τοῦ κρίματος τοῦ μέλλοντος),⁶ Felix was alarmed⁷ and said,

Go away for the present.⁸ When I get an opportunity I will summon you.

26 At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. So he sent for him often and kept conversing (ὁμιλέω, imperf.) with him.⁹ 27 When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.¹⁰

⁵ Again Paul brings up the topic of resurrection.

⁶ **Jn 16:8-11** 8 When [the Helper] comes, he will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment: 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

⁷ The preaching of the gospel should alarm its hearers, especially when the coming judgment is mentioned. The gospel message is no longer an abstract proposition for Felix. Paul's message applies to him personally. Luke wants Theophilus and Nero, too, to understand that the gospel message applies to them personally.

⁸ Felix's negative volition to the gospel message here would have resulted in the hardening of his heart.

⁹ Did Felix ever believe in Jesus? Or did he just maintain intellectual curiosity about Jesus? Felix hears the gospel message from Paul, but he never seems to accept it.

¹⁰ This was a very rude thing to do, after all the time he conversed with Paul. How did Paul feel about this? In the Gospels and Acts, the Romans' doing the Jews a favor always leads to injustice towards Christians.

Notes