

Acts 24:1 ¶ And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and *with* a certain orator *named* Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

Acts 24:2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse *him*, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,

Acts 24:3 We accept *it* always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

Acts 24:4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.

Luke continues the narrative noting that after five days Ananias the high priest along with others of the Jewish leadership came to Caesarea to press their charges against Paul. They brought a lawyer named Tertullus to represent them before the governor.

When called upon to speak, Tertullus began his address by appealing to the governor's ego. He thanked the governor for the great peace and many benefits his people enjoyed due to his governance. He then noted that in consideration of the governor's time he would now summarize the charges against Paul.

Note: The NIV Dictionary quotes Tacitus as describing Felix as a man that "revelled in cruelty and lust, and wielded the power of a king with the mind of a slave." His wife Drusilla was the youngest daughter of Agrippa I.

Acts 24:5 For we have found this man *a pestilent fellow*, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

Acts 24:6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.

Acts 24:7 But the chief captain Lysias came *upon us*, and with great violence took *him* away out of our hands,

Acts 24:8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.

Acts 24:9 And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

Tertullus declared Paul to be a real pest and one that continually stirred up trouble among the Jewish people, not only in Jerusalem but around the world. He was actually the ringleader of a religious sect known as the Nazarenes. The religious authorities had originally arrested Paul for attempting to desecrate the temple. They would have judge Paul according to Jewish law, but Commander Lysias and his troops intervened and took custody of him. He then issued a directive for those who wanted to press charges against Paul to present themselves before you. Tertullus assured the governor that the testimony of Lysias would attest to the truth of these charges.

The religious leaders then affirmed that they agreed with all that the lawyer had said.

Acts 24:10 ¶ Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

Acts 24:11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.

Acts 24:12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

Acts 24:13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

Governor Felix then motioned for Paul to speak. Paul acknowledged that Felix had been a just judge in the nation of Israel for many years, and he was quite ready to defend himself before him.

Paul noted that it had been but twelve days since he first went up to Jerusalem to worship. When he had been accosted in the temple, he was not arguing with anyone or causing any kind of trouble with anyone anywhere in the city. He declared that his accusers could offer no proof for the charges being made against him.

Acts 24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

Acts 24:15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

Acts 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and *toward* men.

Paul then admitted that he was a follower of the way (the sect of the Nazarenes) and worshipped the God of Israel in accordance with all that was written in the law and prophets. Paul declared that he believed the same thing as many of his accusers. He believed that there was a life after death, resurrection for both the just and the unjust. It is that very belief that motivates him to live so as to always have a clean conscience before both God and man. He expected to face God's judgment.

Paul is making a very important point that most of us, even believers, don't reflect that we believe by how we live, by the things that we give priority in our lives, by the choices we make day in, day out.

Acts 24:17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

Acts 24:18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

Acts 24:19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.

Acts 24:20 Or else let these same *here* say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,

Acts 24:21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

Paul reveals to the governor that he had been away for many years and only came back to Jerusalem to bring financial support to help the poor. He noted that he had gone to the temple for ceremonial purification; he was not with a crowd or causing any type of disturbance. It was, in fact, some Jews from Asia who made false charges against him, and they were the ones that should be presenting proof of such charges before you. Otherwise, it was up to those present to give proof that he was guilty of evil doing. The only thing I am guilty of, Paul declared, is that I declared my belief in the resurrection of the dead (a reference to his testimony of having seen and heard from the resurrected Lord Jesus).

Acts 24:22 ¶ And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of *that* way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

Acts 24:23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let *him* have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

It seems that Felix was quite familiar with the teachings of “the Way,” and decided to defer judgment until he could speak with Commander Lysias. He then commanded a centurion to keep Paul in custody, but allow him reasonable freedom of movement and the privilege of visiting with any friends or acquaintances that wanted to visit him or serve him in any way. I think we would compare this to being under house arrest today.

Acts 24:24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

Acts 24:25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

Acts 24:26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

After a few days, Felix came with his wife Drusilla, a Jewess, and asked for Paul to come and talk to him concerning his faith in the Messiah. Paul talked with them about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come before God. At some point, probably when Paul got to the part of coming judgment, Paul’s testimony provoked Felix to fear, and the governor sent him away. He told Paul that he would send for him again when time permitted.

Luke also notes that Felix was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe to release him and sent for him often in light of that hope.

Acts 24:27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix’ room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

After two years, Procius Festus succeeded Felix as governor. Although he could have released Paul at that time, Felix left him in custody as a favor to the Jews.

JFB makes an interesting observation: "That Luke wrote his Gospel during this period, under the apostle's superintendence, is the not unlikely conjecture of able critics."