

Paul's Trial Before Felix

Acts Chapter 24

Act 24:1

1) The Prosecution vs 1-9

The
Assembly

After five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders, with an attorney {named} Tertullus, and they brought charges to the governor against Paul.

- Paul had arrived to Caesarea escorted by armed guards not because he was a threat but because he was threatened.
- He arrived with a letter from the commander of the Guard Claudius Lysias asking the governor Felix to hear this case. The governor said he would hear the council of Elders accusation. (Acts 23:35)
- It took 5 days for them to arrive and they came with a lawyer Tertullus.
 - Shows how much this council wanted Paul disposed of.
 - Good thing they brought a lawyer. They didn't have the truth so they needed a skilled orator to speak to the governor.

Act 24:2

The
Introduction

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,

Act 24:3

we acknowledge {this} in every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness.

Act 24:4

"But, that I may not weary you any further, I beg you to grant us, by your kindness, a brief hearing.

- The introduction. (There was great animosity between the Romans and the Jews)
 - Felix was a slave. But his brother was a friend of the emperor Claudius. Through this influence Felix became a freeman then ultimately a Governor of a Roman province. Felix was the first in Rome to go from a slave to governor.
 - Felix never forgot where he came from and he ruled much like he was treated as a slave. He ruled with brutality and cruelty.
 - Tacitus, a Roman historian, documents that Felix was "*a master of cruelty and lust who exercised the powers of a king with the spirit of a slave - Historiae 5.9*"
 - Jews feared and hated Felix for his strong hand against them.
 - Flattery
 - Through you we have Peace
 - Through your reforms we have Peace
 - We are always talking about how good you are to us
 - We are thankful for you
 - i. Romans 16:18 speaks to us of who "*do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.*"
 - ii. Jude 1:16 speaks of those who "*mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.*"
 - iii. In Proverbs, the Seductress lures men away from wisdom with flattery?
 - iv. Proverbs 20:19 (NKJV) says, "*He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; there for do not associate with one who flatters with his lips.*"
 - We aren't to make flatterers our close friends!
 - v. Psalm 78:36 (NKJV) says we can even flatter God: "*Nevertheless they flattered Him with their mouth, and they lied to Him with their tongue.*"
 - When you give God insincere praise, it is flattery, and God doesn't want it.
- Tertullus then asks for a hearing. The goal of flattery is not to encourage or build up but fulfill selfishness.

Act 24:5
The
Accusation

"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.

Act 24:6

"And he even tried to desecrate the temple; and then we arrested him. [We wanted to judge him according to our own Law.

Act 24:7

"But Lysias the commander came along, and with much violence took him out of our hands,

Act 24:8

ordering his accusers to come before you.] By examining him yourself concerning all these matters you will be able to ascertain the things of which we accuse him."

- The accusations were:
 - He bugs us. (vs 5 he is a pest) NKJV uses he is a plague or pestilence.
 - Sedition, dissention or an insurrection. (Tertullus is referring to sedition from Jewish tradition, but he is leaving that out, so that the governor would think that Paul is an insurrectionist against Rome.)
 - This isn't just a local problem but Empire wide. (Throughout the world)
 - He is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. Nazareth had a poor reputation (John 1:46) also this is a disparaging remark concerning Jesus and His followers. Tertullus calls Paul the ringleader, the boss, the controlling head of this illegal organization. What is implied is that if you cut off its head the pest is dead.
- On a local level...
 - He desecrated the temple. This wasn't true, there was no facts just rumor
 - He broke our law and Lysias stopped our judgment.
- He then asks the governor to examine Paul concerning these things.
- Good strategy:
 - Bugs them - **YES**
 - Dissention - **Not Provable** but a Strong Possibility (concerning traditions yes, Against Rome No)
 - Isn't Local - **YES**
 - A Leader in the sect of Jesus Followers - **YES**
 - Desecration - **Not Provable**
 - Lysias Stopped the Jews - **YES**
- The problem is there are no specifics. Just generalities and nothing provable. On the things that are provable there is nothing illegal about it. Tertullus is hoping that the governor will see that the number of affirmations with the provable and assume the questionable items are true also.

- You & I have an accuser Revelation 12:10 says, *he is before God accusing the brethren day and night*
- Job 1:6-11 *"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil." Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. "But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face."*

But

- John 8:44 describes the nature of the accuser *"You are of {your} father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own {nature,} for he is a liar and the father of lies."*
- Revelation 12:10+11 tells us our accuser's end. *"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."*

Act 24:9
The
Affirmation

The Jews also joined in the attack, asserting that these things were so.

- The Jews in attendance cheered the affirmation to these things.

Act 24:10 **2) The Defense** vs 10-21

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,

- Paul's introduction is short and acknowledges the governor's experience and knowledge of the circumstances.
- It might be subtle but there is a difference between flattery (overemphasized praise for selfish reasons) versus honorable recognition.
- Paul is not giving this governor or the relationship between the Romans and the Jews any false praise. He is simply stating that this governor has been here and knows how things work.
- Paul is glad and confident in his defense.

Act 24:11 since you can take note of the fact that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship.

- Paul points out to the governor that he himself knows that it is the Feast of Pentecost and that he has only arrived for that and it has only been 12 days.
 - It's only been 12 days. What resurrection could I form in 12 days
 - Also, I've been busy with worshipping God.

Act 24:12 "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.

- Paul knows he hasn't yet preached in the temple, synagogue or the city. YET.
- He also knows none of the accusations can be proven

Act 24:13 "Nor can they prove to you {the charges} of which they now accuse me.

Act 24:14 "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;

- Paul confesses the truth.
 - What they call a sect is serving ALL that is written from the Patriarchs, the Law and the Prophets. I believe it all.
 - He is implying the Sadducees pick and choose what they believe.

Act 24:15 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 announces what all men desire. HE HAS HOPE!
- That hope is in the RESURRECTION of both the righteous and the wicked.
Did you know the wicked will be resurrected?

Act 24:16 "In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience {both} before God and before men.

Act 24:17 "Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings;

Act 24:18 in which they found me {occupied} in the temple, having been purified, without {any} crowd or uproar.

- Paul's defense includes a showing of his good character in two ways.
 - Because he believes in the resurrection he strives to be blameless.
 - He tells the governor that he collected alms for the people in Jerusalem and that was what he was presenting in the temple the day of the alleged riot.

But {there were} some Jews from Asia--

Act 24:19 who ought to have been present before you and to make accusation, if they should have anything against me.

- But Jews from Asia created this disturbance. But they were not present in this court to present evidence of wrong doing.
- They should be there. Anything brought up from others is hearsay. There is no eye witness.
- The 6th Amendment to the constitution of the United States says that an accused has the right to face his accuser. That means he has the right to question him.
- That is a reasonable request to this court as well.

Act 24:20 "Or else let these men themselves tell what misdeed they found when I stood before the Council,

Act 24:21 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.' "

- Paul says let these men bring forth evidence.
- The only thing Paul was on trial for was being a Pharisee. Believing the resurrection of the dead.

Can you be convicted of believing in the resurrection?

- Daniel 12:2 The Jews believed in a resurrection. " *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.*"
- John 5:28+29 Jesus taught " *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*"
- Romans 2:6,7,8 " *God, who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, ...eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, ...wrath and indignation.*"
- 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 " *Seeing [it is] a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.*"
- People say all roads lead to God. It's true. But there will be two classifications of people that will come before Him. You want to be in the group that believed.

Act 24:22 **3) The Decision** vs 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."

- Felix's eternal tragedy - He knows about the Way but he puts them off.
- I'll decide later.

Act 24:23 Then 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.

- Felix puts Paul in custody.
- But he has freedom to have visitors.

Act 24:24 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.

Act 24:25 But 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."

- Felix was very interested in what Paul was preaching.
- Felix and his wife listened to Paul about Jesus Christ.
- Paul Preached righteousness, self-control and judgment.
" *The Holy Spirit convicts the world of Sin, Righteous & Judgment*" John 16:8
 - Felix was a brutal governor.
 - Felix was greedy
 - Drusilla was 16 years old and married to a man from Syria but ran away with Felix
 - Felix and Drusilla were living in adultery.
- Felix was frightened (convicted)
- Again Felix puts off his decision. " *Go away for the present*" " *When I find time*"
- 2 Corinthians 6:2 " *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*"

Act 24:26 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.

Act 24:27 But after two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and wishing to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul imprisoned.

- Felix was hoping someone would come forward and pay Felix for his release.
- But he was intrigued with Paul's message. He would summon Paul regularly.
- Two years have passed.
- Felix loses his job. And with putting things off possibly loses his eternal life.

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