

Acts 24.1-27

Making the Good Confession

THIS Part of Acts, Principal HUMAN Actor > PAUL – Apostle to GENTILES

HUMBLED Hero > ARRESTED in Jerusalem – REJECTED by Own PEOPLE

Just Seen - Servant of God – PROTECTED by 470 Skilled Roman SOLDIERS

TRAVELED 100+ kms - Jerusalem NORTH to CAESREA – Caesar's Steed

MAIN EVENT in Ch 24 is TRIAL > Typical ROMAN Court Procedures

JUDGE v. 1,2 they brought their charges...before the governor...presented his case before Felix – Governor of Roman Province of Caesarea

ACCUSED v. 1 charges against Paul

ACCUSERS v. 1 high priest Ananias : BIG DEAL – Traveled 100 kms to Stop Paul

v. 1 some of the elders GANG Up on former COLLEAGUE – BETRAYED Them

v. 1 a lawyer named Tertullus > GREEK Name / JEWISH Attorney HIRED, Professional ORATOR

v. 9 The Jews joined the accusation...

Luke's 1<sup>st</sup> C Readers > FAITH was ON TRIAL, AT RISK Prison, Persecution

Young, Growing, Struggling Church: ENGAGED in Mission – Dangerous, Deadly

Many Areas of World – Even in 21<sup>st</sup> C – NOT SAFE be Practicing CHRISTIAN

WAKE Up & SMELL the COFFEE > Hardly ANY PLACE in WORLD Today

BASIC Right to be PRACTICING CHRISTIAN is NOT under THREAT!

Churches BURNED Indonesia / Christians KILLED in Egypt / HOUSE Arrest

THREATS > Subtle or Severe > Public or Private > w/ Technology or Terrorism

*Legal:* Right to Gathering, Use Facilities, Educate own Kids, Train Pastors

*Academic:* Christian Beliefs openly Attacked in Public Schools & Universities and

NO TIME or OPPORTUNITY is Given for RESPONSE

Wednesday's NY Times Editorial: **The Evangelical Rejection of Reason**

*Economic:* Examples KZ Find Jesus = Lose your Job, Pension, Place in School

*Social:* NAME CALLING 'Fundamentalist=Freak' Evangelical=Extremist

*Media:* – Rarely Portrays Bible-believing, Jesus-loving Person as NORMAL

Many Places 'Religious Freedom' Exist in GHETTO – behind Church WALLS

Not in PUBLIC SQUARE: Media, Malls, Courts, Univ, Govt Offices, Business

Someone wants to CHANGE from SOCIALLY DOMINANT Religion to Follow

JESUS? NO FREEDOM to THAT! Others FREE to Attack! Even KILL

NOTHING NEW to those who FOLLOW a CRUCIFIED MASTER

Jesus: 'A time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.'

John 16.2

Text: See PUBLIC and PRIVATE Behavior of God's IMPRISONED Servant

LUKE: 'New Spin' on COURT TV, SEE Paul w/ CAMERA Lights ON & OFF

GLIMPSE into BOTH COURTROOM and CELL

### 1. Accusations from Unbelievers

a. Flattery > Tertullus, HIRED ORATOR, Luke Greek transl. LATIN Speech

vs. 2,3 Tertullus presented his case before Felix: "We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation. Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude.

World Seeks Wisdom WHO to FLATTER > Decision Makers, Power Holders

POLITICAL Alliances – CAMPAIGN Donations – Public ENDORSEMENTS

That time Felix had BEEN Governor about FIVE Years > Former SLAVE

BROTHER – Pallas – was head of IMPERIAL CIVIL SERVICE – Nepotism

Within CHURCH – Who WRITES Endorsements on BOOK JACKETS, Etc.

WHO Appears on WHOSE TELEVISION Show or MIRACLE MEETINGS

Felix pandered to the depravity of the emperor and rose in the court until he was finally awarded the governorship of Judah. He was corrupt in his administration and was hated by the Jews...characterized by graft...Finally, the corruption of his rule became so great that Nero, who was no great model of morality himself, recalled him.

James Boice

Ask PEACE-LOVING Governor SURELY PUNISH PEACE-DISRUPTING Paul!

b. Falsehood > HISTORY reveals TRUE LEGACY of Original GOVERNATOR

ANTONIUS FELIX – 1<sup>st</sup> Slave in ROMAN Empire to become Gov. of Province

Josephus, Jewish Historian: he Often CRUCIFIED Leaders of Various Uprisings

Felix...was a master of cruelty and lust who exercised the powers of a king with the spirit of a slave

Tacitus, Roman Historian

70 AD – Not 1 OLIVE Tree LEFT on Mt. OLIVES

Romans STRIPPED Garden of ISRAEL into a DESERT

v. 10 Paul replied: “I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation...”

COULD have TRULY Add --- AND NOT a VERY GOOD ONE! Wisdom

FINDS One Common Truth to Commend > More FACT than FLATTERY

i.e. Felix, you've been round BLOCK a FEW Times, NOT NEW Issue to You

Paul did not flatter Felix for fictional justice or wisdom, as Tertullus had celebrated Felix's fictional peace.

Dennis Johnson

v. 5 "We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world."

Lit: 'PLAGUE' – Paul was a PESTILENCE on Earth / Jews were SICK of him

Whenever people are faithful to the gospel, the world sees them first as pests and then as a plague

R.C. Sproul

Accused Challenge to ORDER = INSURRECTION, Rioting, INCITING RIOTS CAPITAL CRIME in ROME and Elsewhere – UNDERSTANDABLE Concern CHARGE Leveled Frequently Agnst – Jesus & Apostles > GET them KILLED!

Every CASE > Luke the Historian > CAREFULLY Shows > NEVER TRUE!!

vs. 11,12 You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city.

NOT Enough TIME TO COMMIT ALL the CRIMES that he was ACCUSED OF

v. 18 I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance.

Followers of KING Jesus ALSO GOOD CITIZENS > No Inherent Conflict

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - *for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.* 1 Timothy 2.1-2

Tertullus tries to CRACK Open DOOR for MORE FALSEHOOD

v. 8 "By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him."

If FELIX Calls for OPEN COURT > Many MORE LIARS Ready to SPEAK

v. 9 The Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true.

NO PROOF – NO TRUTH or LIGHT > All Political INFLUENCE & Pressure

v. 27 because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison

c. Fakes > There WAS RIOTOUS Behavior in JERUSALEM

TIME of ARREST > SEVERAL Examples of MISTAKEN IDENTITY

v. 5b He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect – MAY NOT be Ref. to Jesus  
ANOTHER Jewish/Nazarite TEACHER who LED REVOLT v. Rome 1<sup>st</sup> C

As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, "May I say something to you?" "Do you speak Greek?" he replied. "Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?"

Acts 21.37-38

Some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, shouting, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who...brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place." (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and *assumed* that Paul had brought him into the temple area.)

Acts 21.27-29

WRONG ASSUMPTION > Paul took GENTILE into JEWISH Part of Temple

MISTAKEN IDENTITY > CLEARLY WRONG > FAKE COURT CHARGES

v. 6 (Paul) even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him

Paul defends: v. 19 But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me.

For ROMANS > Jerusalem was POWDER-KEG > TEMPLE was the FUSE

70 AD – Romans TEAR DOWN the TEMPLE Once and FOR EVER!

RIOTS did NOT Come from PREACHERS of Jesus but His PERSECUTORS

MEDIA > Rarely Features NORMAL, Tax-Paying, Law-Abiding, Family-Loving, Hard-Working, Church-Going, God-Fearing Follower of JESUS

Someone who SHOOTS Up SCHOOL > Ever Attended Church on Easter, UNCLE a Pastor, Attended Church Camp, Raised hand in Xtian Meeting THAT Person MUST BE MODEL Christian > They're Guilt = ALL Guilty

## 2. Assurance for a Believer

Paul DEFINES Himself before EVERYONE Else has DEFINED him

#### a. Worshipper: Confidence in God

v. 14 *I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way*

## Every PLACE – ALL Times – Paul KNOWN by His Worship of GOD

*In Philippi...crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten...severely flogged...thrown into prison...fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight *Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God*, and the other prisoners were listening to them.*

## Does WORLD TODAY Define CHRISTIANS as WORSHIPPERS of God

OR POLITICAL Party – Views on ABORTION, GAY Marriage, GUN Ownership  
BEING a WORSHIPPER of GOD gave PAUL DEEP CONFIDENCE in God

Felix was CORRUPT JUDGE > Paul's Joy to Know RIGHTEOUS JUDGE  
v. 10 When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "...I gladly make my defense."

Even when ‘Rotting in this Stinking Prison...No End in Sight!’

v. 27 When two years had passed, Felix...left Paul in prison.

PAUL writes to INSTILL this CONFIDENCE into TIMID Lieutenant Timothy:

As THE ONE We Worship Stood in CONFIDENCE before Corrupt Gov. Pilate  
Paul CONFIDENTLY WORSHIPS Him - Savior who is Now SOVEREIGN

Endured Pilate's CROSS Now Enjoys CROWN of Paradise

In CONFIDENCE Paul the PRISONER stands before Gov. Felix as Worshipper  
Ephesians > PRISON LETTER – No Tone of Whiner, Complaining, Self-Focus  
I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles...a prisoner for the  
Lord Ephesians 3.1, 4.1

## AWE > Paul's Panoramic, Selfless Vision > God's GLORIOUS Plan in Christ

‘God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but *forever*. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this Christ rules the church. ***The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world: the world is peripheral to the church.***’      End of Ephesians 1, *The Message*

**NOT Wrong for Christians to BE POLITICAL, Support MORAL ISSUES,  
ECONOMIC Policies > HOLD ALL that in FAR SECONDARY POSITION  
PRIMARY DEFINITION > We are WORSHIPPERS of God**

NOT Imply we UNDERSTAND All He Does, Far Less EXPLAIN All He Is  
IF We COULD > He would NOT be WORTHY of our WORSHIP!

ERA of Sound Bites, Christian Spokespeople so SMUG, Answers AIR-TIGHT  
Where is WORSHIP? WONDER? Being LOST in OWN KNOWLEDGE??

But WONDERFULLY CONFIDENT in EMBRACE of Him We KNOW!

BRILLIANT Paul > Defines himself PRIMARILY as WORSHIPPER of God!

## ONE Thing our FATHER SEEKS from US –

A time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for *they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.*

John 4.23

b. Believer: Conversation about Scripture NOT EMPTY-Headed Worship!  
 NOT Saying ‘Does not Matter how you THINK About God, just WORSHIP!’  
 In WORSHIP > More we THINK, MORE Beyond Our THOUGHTS HE Is!

HEAVEN: MORE Learning, More GROWING in KNOWING Him, Discovery  
 AWESOME Experience of FINDING NO END to ALL His PERFECTIONS  
 If PAUL Just BELIEVED ANYTHING about God: Trial OVER, Prison Open  
 v. 14,15 I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the  
 Prophets. and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a  
 resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

The church was claiming in fact that the Old Testament was a Christian book.

I. Howard Marshall

v. 21 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today'

In synagogue or marketplace, in private conversation or public courtroom, whatever  
 the occasion and whatever his starting point, Paul found a way to bring the subject  
 around to the resurrection, the central reality that showed Christ’s cross to be  
 vicarious, his present lordship to be supreme, and his future return to be inevitable.

Dennis Johnson

Luke: Several places in ACTS > Paul was ARGUING, DISPUTING, Debating

Argument NOT INSURRECTION of STATE > **Interpretation of Scripture**

Church in EGYPT – PROTESTS not PRAYER Meeting – 25 Dead Christians

v. 22 Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings.  
 "When Lysias the commander comes," he said, "I will decide your case."

If FELIX was JUST, as he SHOULD BE > QUICK End of PUBLIC Trial of Paul  
 NOT Matter for ROMAN STATE > Matter of JEWISH SCRIPTURE

In CORINTH – Luke shows NOBLE Example of ROMAN ADMINISTRATOR:

Gallio was proconsul of Achaia... the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court...Gallio said to the Jews, "If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law--settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things." So he had them ejected from the court.

Acts 18.12-16

TRUE Then & NOW > Ancient ROME > Uzbekistan, Israel, Guantanamo

### **JUSTICE DELAYED is JUSTICE DENIED**

Jerusalem and Rome were the centres of two enormously strong power blocs. The faith of Jerusalem went back two millennia to Abraham. The rule of Rome extended some three million square miles round the Mediterranean Sea... history and tradition...conquest and organization...The combined might of Jerusalem and Rome was overwhelming. If a solitary dissident like Paul were to set himself against them, the outcome would be inevitable...a butterfly before a steamroller... But Paul's contention was that in principle the gospel both supports the rule of Caesar and fulfills the hope of Israel...(he was) a loyal citizen of Rome and a loyal son of Israel.

John Stott

TAKES Evangelistic Opportunity – In Season & Out - Mtg Felix & Drusilla

vs. 22,24 Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way....came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him

*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience...*

1 Peter 3.15-16

Came as CURIOUS SEEKERS > CHRIST-LIKE Attraction of Prisoner PAUL

FELIX Married 3 X's > Drusilla, married Felix at age 14 now about 20,  
Her 2<sup>nd</sup> Marriage, dad Herod Agrippa

Felix Hired CYPRIATE MAGICIAN to lure Drusilla from FORMER Husband UNION formed because they had NO SELF CONTROL, UNRIGHTEOUS FUNDAMENTAL Problem > They do NOT KNOW Christ Jesus thru FAITH THEY Stand in GREAT DANGER before the JUDGEMENT of GOD

vs. 24,25 Paul...spoke about faith in Christ Jesus...discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come

PAUL Bravely MOVES Conversation Beyond POLITE ‘Chit, Chat’ with GOV  
Sometimes we are AFRAID to CONFRONT SIN in OWN CHURCHES

PAUL Confronts SIN in Leader who HOLDS Power of Life & Death Over him

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Ephesians 6.19-20

v. 25 As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come,  
*Felix was afraid*

PAUL has more FEAR FOR them than FEAR OF them > CONFIDENT in X

HUGH LATIMER preached to HENRY 8<sup>th</sup> – Offended him with his BOLDNESS  
English Reformer commanded to Preach Next Weekend to offer APOLOGY  
Next Sunday, after Reading Sermon Text – BEGAN Sermon to Henry 8<sup>th</sup>:  
Hugh Latimer, dost thou know before whom thou art to this day to speak? To the  
high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, who can take away  
thy life if thou offendest; therefore, take heed that thou speakest not a word that  
may displease; but then consider well, Hugh, dost thou not know from whence thou  
comest; upon whose message thou art sent? Even by the great and mighty God!  
Who is all-present, and who beholdeth all thy ways, and is able to cast thy soul in  
hell! Therefore, take care that thou deliverest thy message faithfully. Hugh Latimer

Then preached Henry 8<sup>th</sup> SAME SERMON as Week Before with MORE ENERGY

c. Behavior: Conscience is Clear > Christ-follower 24 / 7

ONLY Ground of his ACCUSERS is FALSEHOOD and FAKERY  
 UNDERSTOOD by MOST EVERYONE in ROOM > God Most of ALL  
 W/ No POMP or PRIDE > Paul OUTWITS Professional Lawyer TERTULLUS  
 He was not arguing about his rights but about the facts.      John Calvin

IRREFUTABLE SPIRIT of God that Rested on Stephen the MARTYR  
 Now RESTS on Paul his MURDERER

....they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke  
 Acts 6.10

- No one could prove the charges against Paul were true.
- His main accusers, the Jews from Asia, were not present.
- The Sanhedrin had no clear charges against him.
- Under Roman Law at that time, Christianity was a protected religion, considered a branch of Judaism.
- Paul was no threat to human life and safety.
- Paul's theology was not a matter to be judged by the Roman state.

v. 16 I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

CLEAN CONSCIENCE > Often Mentioned by PAUL as Very IMPORTANT  
 Who are you when NO ONE ELSE is LOOKING? ALONE with GOD?

In the END of the DAY > That is WHERE we will Stand > Alone before God!

'STRIVE' = ATHLETIC Strife > CONTINUITY, EFFORT, GIVE BEST

The early Christians not only out-thought their opponents, they also out-lived them...The force of blameless lives has been powerful in defending Christianity against attacks from outside in every age. Ajith Fernando

Today's Christianity SAD Mix of MATERIALISM and MORAL Failure  
 JESUS is Coming for BRIDE > PURE / To Lead ARMY that is PREPARED  
 v. 26 Felix... was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.

Perhaps FELIX thought – ‘Paul brought MONEY for Jews, what’s FOR ME?’  
 SOME Would Pay AND Have Good THEOLOGICAL/Missiological Defense  
 BEFORE God Paul COULD NOT & DID NOT > Paid with Time, Flesh, Blood  
 PAUL stayed 2 Years > Victim of INJUSTICE, Corrupt POLITICS, GREED

Paul could FIX IT with FAST CASH > Saved 2 years of MOSS on BACKSIDE  
 SAW BIG PICTURE > Lived by Faith – Painful and Uncertain – BIG GOD  
 Powerful FELIX Quickly FELL from Position – Minor Footnote in HISTORY  
 We REMEMBER PAUL -- 2000 Years LATER > **Timeless Integrity**

OTHER Religions: ‘BE Good’, JESUS ‘I MAKE you GOOD, Repent, Believe’  
 TODAY – We can MAKE MUCH of FAMOUS PERSON Talking to Preacher  
 CALLING them to TALK, PRAY, COUNSEL > GOOD!

NO VIP Door into KINGDOM of God > Gate SMALL, Way NARROW, FEW  
 TICKLED by CURIOSITY > NOT TROUBLED by CONVICTION of SIN  
 v. 25 Felix: "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you."

GREAT Tragedy of FELIX > Postponed Making Right Decision about Paul  
 GREATEST Tragedy > Postponed Making Right Decision about JESUS

KNEW – Paul was Innocent, Much about ‘the Way’, he was Sinner, in Danger  
APPEARS from ACTS > NEVER CONVENIENT > Never Right with God  
NOT CONVENIENT – Too Busy? Too Much fun with Drusilla? Too Proud?  
IMPORTANT Person: FELIX Governor, Judge > Determined FATE of MANY

The kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?" Revelation 6.15-17

## Revelation 6.15-17

WHO will STAND in that FINAL, FEAR SOME Day? Global Judgment??

NOT Felix – Not Pilate, Not Even Caesar – Not Me, You, NOT Even PAUL

**ONLY the LAMB – Alone is WORTHY – SLAIN for SINNERS, in GLORY**

**Jesus the Judge, Cannot be BRIBED or BOUGHT Off – ONLY be BELIEVED**

"In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

2 Corinthians 6.2

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Acts 24 1 Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor. 2 When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: "We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation. 3 Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude. 4 But in order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly. 5 "We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect 6 and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him. 8 By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him." 9 The Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true. 10 When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense. 11 You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. 12 My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. 13 And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me. 14 However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, 15 and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. 16 So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man. 17 "After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. 18 I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. 19 But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me. 20 Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin- 21 unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'" 22 Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. "When Lysias the commander comes," he said, "I will decide your case." 23 He ordered the centurion to keep Paul under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs. 24 Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. 25 As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now!"

You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you." 26 At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him. 27 When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison.