

Acts 24.1-27

“This Man is a Plague”

Acts ch 24, Principal Human Actor > PAUL – Apostle to GENTILES

Humbled Hero > Arrested in Jerusalem, Jews: “This Man is a Plague”

Just Seen Paul the PLAGUE – Protected by 470 Roman SOLDIERS

Rushed by Armed Guards on Caesar’s Steed 65 mi Jerusalem to Caesarea

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

Chapter 4 parts – Prosecutor/Tertullus 1-9 – Paul’s Defense 10-21 – Judge Felix’s Response 22-23 – Paul’s Witness to Gov Felix 24-27

JUDGE v. 1,2 they laid before the governor their case His Excellency Felix – Governor of Roman Province of Caesarea 23.26

ACCUSED v. 1 case against Paul / ACCUSERS v. 1 high priest

Ananias: BIG DEAL – Traveled 65 miles to Stop Paul

v. 1 “some elders” Gang Up on former Colleague – BETRAYED Them

v. 1 lawyer / spokesman Tertullus > Gk Name / Paid Attorney, Orator

v. 9 The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming all these things ...

Luke’s 1st C Readers > Faith ON TRIAL, AT RISK Prison, Persecution

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

NOW 21st C Many Areas of World — NOT SAFE be Practicing XTIAN

Even Opening Ceremony of OLYMPICS Mocks JESUS and GOSPEL

Threats: Subtle or Severe > Public or Private > Technology or Terrorism

Many Places ‘Religious Freedom’ Exist in Ghetto behind Church Walls

Not PUBLIC Square: Media, Malls, Courts, Univ, Govt Offices, Business

NOTHING NEW to those who FOLLOW a CRUCIFIED MASTER

Ch 24 PUBLIC & PRIVATE Behavior of God’s IMPRISONED Servant

1. Accusations from Unbelievers

a. Flattery > Tertullus, Hired Orator, Lawyer / Luke Gk transl. LATIN

vs. 2,3 Tertullus began to BLOVIATE: “Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since by your foresight, most excellent Felix, reforms are being made for this nation, in every way and everywhere we accept this with all gratitude”

World FLATTERS > Decision Makers, Power Holders, Superstars!

F's Brother Pallas: Head of Rome's Civil Service, Connected? Nepotism?

T. asks PEACE-Loving Gov to punish PEACE-DISRUPTING Paul!

b. Falsehood > HISTORY: TRUE LEGACY of ANTONIUS FELIX

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

1st Slave in ROMAN Empire to become Gov. of Province

Josephus, Jewish Historian: F. 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

Led Destruction 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..."

Finds 1 Common Truth to Commend > More FACT than FLATTERY

"Paul did not flatter Felix for fictional justice or wisdom" Dennis Johnson

v. 5 "we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all Jews throughout the world & is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes"

'PLAGUE' – Paul 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

vs. 11,12 NOT Enough TIME TO COMMIT ALL those CRIMES!

v. 18 While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or tumult.

Tertullus tries to CRACK Open DOOR for MORE FALSEHOOD

v. 8 "By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him." >> AMEN CHOIR agrees...

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

NO Proof, NO TRUTH or LIGHT > All Political Influence & Pressure

v. 27 desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix 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

Other Jewish/Nazarite TEACHER who LED REVOLT v. Rome 1st C

As Paul was brought into the barracks...“May I say something to you?” “Do you know Greek? Are you not the Egyptian who stirred up revolt...?” Paul replied, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia Acts 21.37-39

Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowdThis man teaching everyone everywhere against the people, the law, this place...brought Greeks into Temple/defiled” Acts 21.27-29

v. 18 But some Jews from Asia (Made ACCUSATION/Then GHOSTED) — they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, should they have anything against me. Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found

For Romans> Jerusalem was POWDER-KEG > TEMPLE was FUSE

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

2. Assurance for a Believer

Paul DEFINES Himself before EVERYONE Else has DEFINED him

a. Worshipper: Confidence in God v. 14 I confess that according to the Way - I worship the God of our fathers

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

In Philippi...crowd attack Paul and Silas, magistrates ordered stripped & beaten...severely flogged...thrown into prison... fastened their feet in the stocks...midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them Acts 16.22-25

Does WORLD today Define CHRISTIANS as WORSHIPPERS of God

OR Political Party – Views on Abortion, GAY Marriage, GUN Ownership

Being WORSHIPPER of GOD gave Paul DEEP CONFIDENCE in God

Felix was Corrupt JUDGE > Paul’s Joy to Know RIGHTEOUS Judge

v. 10 Paul: " I cheerfully make my defense. ...” / Even in Stinking Prison

v. 27 two years had elapsed...Felix left Paul in prison.

NOT Wrong Xtians be Political, Support MORAL ISSUES, Economic Policies > HOLD ALL that in FAR SECONDARY POSITION

PRIMARY DEFINITION > We are WORSHIPPERS 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 in Scripture - NOT EMPTY-Headed Worship!

NOT say ‘Does not Matter HOW U THINK About God, just WORSHIP!’

v. 14,15 I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.

If Paul just Believed ANYTHING about God: Trial OVER, Prison Open

The church was claiming that the Old Testament was a Christian book. I. Howard Marshall

v. 21 ‘with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial’

v. 22 Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, put them off, saying, “When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case.”

If Felix was JUST, as Should BE > QUICK End of PUBLIC Trial of Paul

NOT Matter for ROMAN STATE > Matter of JEWISH SCRIPTURE

vs. 24 After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul & heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus

CURIOUS SEEKERS > CHRIST-LIKE Attraction of Prisoner PAUL

FELIX Married 3 X’s > Drusilla 2 X’s, married Felix @ 14 now ab

D’s DAD Herod Agrippa Killed Ap James – Acts 12 – Eaten by Worms

Great Grandpa killed Babies Beth / Great Uncle Killed John Bapt

Paul Bravely moves Conversation Beyond Polite ‘Chit, Chat’ with GOV

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 Paul reasoned about righteousness & self-control & coming judgment

Yesterday’s Sin cries be cleansed by Righteousness, Jesus Righteous ONE

Today’s Temptation need Self-Control – Jesus gives Holy Spirit & Power

Tomorrow’s Judgment can only be Turned Away by RISEN Jesus

1540 Hugh Latimer preached K. Henry 8th Offended him w his Boldness

English Reformer commanded to Preach Next Sunday offer APOLOGY

Next Sunday, after Reading Sermon Text – BEGAN Sermon to Henry 8th :

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 8th Same Sermon as Week Before w More Vigor

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

- 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.
- Roman Law: Xtianity protected religion, 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 always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God & man

CONSCIENCE > Often Mentioned by PAUL as Very IMPORTANT

Who are you when NO ONE ELSE is LOOKING? ALONE with GOD?

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

'take PAINS' = Muscles burn like Athlete > Rigorous 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

Other Relig: 'BE Good', Jesus: 'I Make U GOOD > Repent, Believe'

Jesus Coming for BRIDE > PURE / To Lead ARMY that's PREPARED

v. 26 Felix... hoped that money would be given him by Paul. So he sent for him often and conversed with him

Perhaps FELIX thought – ‘Paul brought MONEY for Jews, what’s FOR ME?’

Before God Paul Could NOT & DID NOT > Paid with Time, Flesh, Blood

Paul stayed 2 Years > Victim of Injustice, Corrupt Politics, GREED

Powerful Felix Quickly FELL from Position – Minor Footnote in History

We REMEMBER PAUL -- 2000 Years LATER > **Timeless Integrity**

v. 26 Felix was alarmed and said, “Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you.”

Great Tragedy of Felix > Postponed Making Right Decision about Paul

Procrastination: Postponed Making Right Decision about JESUS

1 of these Days=NONE of these Days, Procrastination THIEF of his Soul

Knew Paul was Innocent, Much about ‘the Way,’ a 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

Ignored TRUE LIVING God who Determined his ETERNAL Fate

One of most GRIM Scenes of the Revelation shown to Apostle John:

“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

WHO will STAND in FINAL, FEARSOME 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 – ONLY 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

Congregational Prayer – Psalm 54

O God, save me by your name, and vindicate me by your might.

O God, hear my prayer; give ear to the words of my mouth.

For strangers have risen against me;

ruthless men seek my life; they do not set God before themselves.

Behold, God is my helper;

the Lord is the upholder of my life.

He will return the evil to my enemies;

in your faithfulness put an end to them.

With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you;

I will give thanks to your name, O Lord, for it is good.

For he has delivered me from every trouble,

and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies. Amen.