

Acts 24 – Paul’s Case Before Felix

I. The Case Against Paul (1-9)

A. The Accusers Arrive (1)

1. The High Priest and Some Elders Appear Before Felix
2. A Lawyer, Tertullus, accompanies them to bring charges
 - a. They probably knew that the trial before the Roman governor would be different – Paul is a Roman – Religious charges won’t do
 - b. Caesarea is the seat of the provincial government

B. The Lawyer Brings The Charges (2-9)

1. Honorary Introduction (2-4) – common in legal oratory
 - a. Praise For Felix (2)
 - i. Felix has established peace through his governorship – law and order
 - ii. Felix had put down a few rebellions and uprisings in Jerusalem, saving the Jewish leadership from being overthrown
 - iii. Tertullus praises Felix’s management in carrying out reforms among the Jews
 - This is probably the beginning of Paul’s set up. They will say Paul has jeopardized the peace
 - b. Thanks To Felix (3-4)
 - i. Tertullus states the people’s universal gratitude for all that Felix has accomplished
 - He is probably speaking for the Jewish elders who are present
 - ii. Tertullus promises not to waste Felix’s time in bringing the accusations against Paul
2. Charges Against Paul (5-6a)
 - a. Paul Stirs Sedition Around The World (5a)
 - i. Paul is called a public enemy, causing riots all over the world
 - This isn’t the idea of just disturbing the peace which would be bad enough, the idea is that he is trying to stir up rebellion or sedition
 - The Romans were very particular about keeping even the smallest uprising down
 - In the letter from Lysia to Felix, Paul is only accused of religious crimes, here they are trying to accuse him of political crimes
 - They use the turmoil in the cities Paul visited to accuse him before Felix – even

though it was the Jews themselves that caused the disturbances

- To the governor this charge would seem plausible given Paul's history. Trouble seemed to follow him
- This charge was political and couldn't just be dismissed by the governor like Gallio did in Corinth

b. Paul Leads a Seditious Sect (5b)

- i. The Jews are distancing themselves from Paul
- ii. They wanted Felix to be aware that Paul was the leader of a sect that pledged devotion to a man executed as a criminal by the Romans
- iii. This places Paul at odds with the Jews and the Romans

c. Paul Attempted to Defile the Temple (6a)

- i. Rome kept the Temple rules for the Jews to keep them satisfied – to have it defiled would cause havoc among the people
- ii. Not that he did, but that he tried to
- iii. Paul now has not only to defend that he didn't defile the Temple, but that he had no intention of doing it

3. Reason For the Trial (6b-8a)

a. The Jews Attempted To Judge Him (6b)

- i. They imply that he would have defiled it if they hadn't taken him when they did
 - Remember it was a mob led by Jews from Asia that grabbed him, not the leadership
- ii. They also had no course to try Paul according to their law – The Roman brought Paul down the next day

b. Lysias Violently Took Paul (7)

- i. This makes it sound like the Jews were orderly and about to try Paul if it were not for the violent Roman who intervened
- ii. They are framing the information to make Paul look guilty and then look like good citizens

c. Lysias Commanded the Trial Before Felix (8a)

- i. This whole trial taking up Felix's time is Lysias' fault
- ii. If it weren't for the Roman commander's intervention, they wouldn't be bothering Felix

4. Conclusion (8b)

- a. He ends with flattery

- b. Felix is smart enough to figure all this out about Paul by himself
 - C. The Jews Affirm The Case Against Paul (9)
 - 1. The Jews corroborate the case Tertullus has just laid out
 - 2. They add their voices as if they were eyewitnesses to what had happened.
 - 3. This would be a very compelling case in Felix's mind
- II. Paul's Defense Before Felix (10-21)
 - A. Honorary Introduction (10)
 - 1. Paul also begins in the style of legal oratory
 - 2. However, notice that Paul's flattery of Felix is far shorter than Tertullus'
 - a. Paul speaks as a confident man, ready to defend himself
 - b. He has already been promised by God that he will go to Rome – He knows that he will get there
 - B. Refutation of the Accusations (11-13)
 - 1. He was only in Jerusalem a short time (11)
 - a. Paul was only in Jerusalem for 12 days
 - b. Paul didn't have enough time to try and organize a revolt
 - c. Paul will limit his testimony to Jerusalem because Felix is only governor of that province – the rest of the world's events is not his problem
 - 2. He was involved in no dispute in Jerusalem (12)
 - a. Paul was seized in the Temple for no reason
 - i. As far as we know, Paul didn't even preach there during that time
 - ii. He was involved in no dispute whatsoever when they seized him
 - iii. He was fulfilling his purification and worshiping in the Temple
 - b. Paul didn't stir anyone in the synagogues or the crowds in the city
 - 3. The Jews Cannot prove any of their accusations (13)
 - C. Explanation of Paul's Belief (14-16)
 - 1. Paul is of "The Way" (14a)
 - a. He admits that he is a follower of Jesus – but denies that it is a "sect"
 - b. He does not admit to being a ringleader of any kind
 - c. Notice in what follows that Paul connects the worship of Jesus with the worship of the God of Israel
 - 2. Paul is Consistent With Judaism (14b-15)
 - a. He hopes in Israel's God (14b)
 - i. Jesus is not just a sect, he is the fulfillment of the hope in the God of Israel

- ii. Paul continues to worship the God of Israel's fathers
 - iii. Jesus is the fulfillment of all of Judaism, including the Law and the Prophets
 - iv. Paul is not an enemy to Judaism, he is a true Israelite by trusting in Jesus
 - b. He trusts in a final judgment (15)
 - i. He continues to trust in the resurrection of all the dead
 - ii. He mentions that all those Jews present believe this as well.
 - This may be a backhanded warning to those Jews bringing false charges against him
 - 3. Paul Strives For a Clear Conscience
 - a. Because of his belief in Israel's God and the coming judgment – He does everything to keep a good conscience before God and man
 - b. He is asserting his honesty as he is about to describe the events that took place
- D. Description of The Events (17-21)
- 1. Reason For Paul's Visit To Jerusalem (17)
 - a. He refutes the idea that he is a seditious enemy of the Jews
 - b. He came to bring alms to his people
 - i. Remember he was bringing a collection to the church of Jerusalem
 - ii. This is what he means when he says "my" nation
 - c. He came into the Temple to Worship and bring offerings
 - i. That is his reason for being in the Temple complex
 - The "offerings" were not sacrifices but the purity offerings he gave for the four Jewish Christians we saw in ch. 21
 - The crowd and the disturbance had absolutely nothing to do with Paul's activities in Jerusalem
 - ii. He was not inciting a riot or preaching to the people
 - 2. Paul Caused No Disturbance in the Temple (18a)
 - a. The Jews from Asia found him in the Temple without crowd or disturbance around him
 - b. They simply grabbed him because of what they thought he had done
 - 3. Paul's Actual Accusers Should Be Here (8b)

- a. The Jews from Asia are the actual witnesses to the event in the Temple. They are the ones who actually seized him.
 - b. They are the ones who should be here bringing charges
 - i. These Jewish leaders weren't even there when he was taken
 - ii. Paul should be allowed to face his accusers
- 4. The Present Jews Can Only Testify to Paul's Hearing (20-21)
 - a. These Jews can only testify to what they heard at Paul's hearing
 - i. When they tried to question him to find out what was going on he gave only one statement
 - ii. He stated that he was on trial for the hope of the resurrection
 - iii. Paul is trying to swing the charges back to religious instead of political – He is still on trial for that belief
 - b. These Jews have no actual evidence or testimony that he caused any riot in Jerusalem. They weren't even there.

III. Paul's Witness For Christ (22-27)

A. Felix Delays A Decision (22-23)

- 1. Felix Decides to Wait For Lysias (22)
 - a. Remember Lysias' letter said Paul was guilty of only religious crimes, nothing deserving death
 - b. Felix wants to maintain good relations with the Jews but he can't just execute a Roman citizen either.
- 2. Felix Places Paul Under Light Guard (23)
 - a. Paul is granted some freedoms
 - b. Paul is allowed to have his friends meet his needs – clothing, food, books, etc.

B. Felix Repeatedly Hearts The Gospel (24-27)

- 1. Felix hears Paul while he is imprisoned
 - a. Maybe he was genuinely interested at this point
 - b. His wife was a Jew
 - c. Why would Paul want to continue conversing with Felix?
- 2. Felix is Alarmed by Paul's Message (24-26)
 - a. Paul speaks of Righteousness, temperance, and judgment
 - i. Righteousness? – Christ's, sin, the law of God
 - ii. Temperance – self-control, sin's power, the fall
 - iii. Coming Judgment – the final judgment of the lost
 - b. This alarmed and frightened Felix
 - i. He has understood the law at least – realizes he is in trouble

- ii. Felix ends the meeting. He is not ready to accept the gospel – later meetings will be focused on Felix wanting money.
- 3. Felix Hoped Paul Would Bribe Him (26)
 - a. Felix probably thought Paul was well off – bringing money into Jerusalem from all over the world
- 4. Felix is Later Replaced As Governor (27)
 - a. Paul remains in custody for two years – Felix wasn't going to do anything
 - b. Felix was recalled as governor in 59 A.D.
 - i. A dispute between Jews and Greeks erupted over Caesarea and Felix sent in troops who killed many people
 - ii. Both the Jews and Greeks sent people to Rome to complain to emperor Nero
 - iii. Felix's brother Pallas pleaded to Nero for him and he was spared serious punishment
 - c. Festus was governor from 59-62