

Claudius Lysias, the commander of the Romans in Jerusalem, has sent Paul to Caesarea in order that Felix would hear and judge the case against Paul. After a week, the Jews arrived bringing Tertullus, their great orator in order to present a convincing case before Felix since they have no proof whatsoever.

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: Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. 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: ¹³ Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.'* All that they accuse is false! Let them prove these charges... they cannot!

Verse 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: 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.'*

'The Way' Paul mentions is, of course, Salvation by God's Grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus said, **'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.'** John 14:6

Jesus Christ is the only Way; this is the Truth and we will be resurrected; ours is Eternal Life!

When Paul refers to the resurrection of the 'just and the unjust,' he does not mean 'good people and bad people;' we know he does not mean, those who are 'good enough' to be saved because none are; he says, 'What they call heresy, I say that I simply believe all of God's Word: Genesis through Malachi, all the Law and Prophets. My hope is based on Jesus Christ's Resurrection from the dead which they also do allow.

'That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.' Rom 10:9

'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' Eph 2:8

And you see... this was a major sticking point with the Jews: only Jews could be good enough; they had circumcision and the Law and Prophets; they were born into salvation, or so they thought, like so many false religions around the World. They also were adamant that no Gentile could ever be good enough unless he were to convert to Judaism; to even suggest so was heresy.

We see how Catholicism sees itself as the new Israel; the Gentile 'church' which has taken the place of the rejected Israel. Their priesthood is patterned after the Levitical Priesthood and they believe that infant sprinkling baptism brings the child into the 'church' just as the Jews believed that circumcision brought the child into the promises to Israel; both are works of the flesh while neither of which involves the belief or faith of the child, but God's Word says: *'For by grace are ye saved through faith...*' not the faith of the parents or priest.

When Paul says 'just,' he means those who have been justified by God's Grace through Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; when he says 'unjust,' he means everyone else!

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

'I believe all of God's Word and I conduct my life accordingly and none of these can prove differently.'

Verse 17: *'Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.'*

I have been on several missionary journeys, preaching and teaching but also collecting offerings of moneys to give to those in need in Judea... I have done nothing deserving of persecution or arrest and, yet, here we are.

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

Certain Jews from Asia... outsiders... not even from here... they've been following me for years, desperately trying to destroy the ministry to which God has called and ordained me.

I had joined several men in purification, in which state I did enter the Temple; I was clean, ceremonially pure; I did not raise a multitude nor cause any tumult; it was all caused by these Jews from Asia; I am innocent.

Verse 19: *'Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.'*

They are the ones who should have been here to accuse me to my face and offer any alleged proof; they have no proof which is the reason they have stayed away! You know this is Roman Law: the accused's right to face his accusers... where are they!? Where is their so-called evidence!? I should not even be here! They know it and so should you.

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

That's it! Half of these, here, do also believe in a coming resurrection of the dead! And, by the way, Felix... if you only knew the reason they want to kill me, which is, that I was instructed, by God, to take this Gospel of Salvation to the Gentiles! That is the source of their deadly and murderous hatred! Oh... and by the way... aren't you a Gentile, Felix? Aren't you one whom they do so hate, even though you are married to a Jewess!? I, Paul, love the Gentiles; they hate the Gentiles (like you, Felix)!

That is what I think Paul should have said but... that could have resulted in his immediate release rather than his continued confinement which, according to God's plan, would eventuate his being taken, finally, up to Rome where he will bring the Gospel to Caesar's household and from where he will write some of our eternally preserved Word of God: his letters to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians and his letter to Philemon; we know he led others, in Caesar's household, to faith by what he wrote to the Philippians: *'All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.'* Philippians 4:22

So, we see that Paul was not really seeking his own release; remember that God had appeared unto Paul in a vision: *'And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.'* Acts 23: 11

Verse 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.'*

Felix had a better understanding of Paul's Gospel, 'that Way' than did all his accusers so, like all other bureaucrats, he kicked the can down the road; he put off any judgment until sometime later... anytime later... *no time later* would have been his first choice but that he could not do so... at least we will wait until Lysias comes 'down' from Jerusalem.

Felix may have been hoping that Lysias would be too preoccupied to be able to come from Jerusalem; you know to what I refer if you've ever had a traffic ticket and your turn finally arrives for you to stand up before the judge and the cop, who was obviously and definitely mistaken when he wrote you up for supposedly going 39 in a 25 zone... as you've prayed... the cop is not there to testify and so the judge says, 'dismissed!'... not that I'd ever speak from experience of ever having had such an experience...

Verse 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. 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.'*

Felix understands about the Gospel and is, perhaps, drawn to the Truth of the Gospel; we'll see that Paul will have carefully explained it to Felix; if, in the end... really the 'end,' if Felix finally, upon death, finds himself in Hades, waiting for nearly 3000 years unto the Final Judgment and sentencing to the Lake of Fire... he will have only himself to blame.

Verse 25: *'And as he (Paul) reasoned (with Felix) 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.'*

See that!? As Paul carefully explained the Gospel, including of the judgment to come, Felix trembled! He heard and he even understood but there is no mention of his having ever, in faith and humility, surrendered his heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ! In fact, he sent Paul away until such time as was more convenient to him! Imagine having spent the past 3000 years remembering you said that to Paul! Imagine such a horrible remembrance as that! Imagine the thousands of times screaming out to God: 'I've changed my mind! Give me one more chance... Please... Please... Please...'

But the Lord Jesus Christ will say to him... '*I never knew you: depart from me...*' Matt 7:23

Felix thinks he has all the time in the World but Paul knows how serious this decision is for everyone!

He will later write: '*We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)*' 2Cor 6:1

Verse 26: '*He (Felix) 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.*'

What a sad commentary on the life and eternal destiny of Felix! Hoping for a bribe, Felix sent for and 'communed often' with Paul; he sat and listened to the Gospel, personally explained by the one to whom the Lord Jesus Christ had entrusted the Gospel... over and over again with his only motivation being his lust for money... without ever responding to God's offer of His precious gifts: repentance and faith to believe; he closed his cold, hard, lust filled heart. Hopefully, his wife, Drusilla, had a wiser and more discerning heart.

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

Finally, after two years, Felix's successor arrives, one Porcius Festus and of Felix we see no faith in Jesus Christ, no faith unto Salvation and only in his self seeking desire for a good review from the Jews, he left Paul still imprisoned! What a sorry and pathetic individual was Felix!

Acts 25:1: '*Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem. ² Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him (tattled, lied) against Paul, and besought him, ³ And desired favour against him, that he (Festus) would send for him to Jerusalem, (while they) laying wait in the way to kill him.*'

Festus comes from Rome to replace Felix; he went first to Caesarea where he would take over the governor's mansion from Felix and then, just 3 days later he went to Jerusalem to meet the worst part of this stationing: the Jews; the Jewish leadership; everyone in Rome knew about the Jews; in fact, it would only be a few years until Rome will have finally had it with the Jews; Titus will overrun and completely demolish everything of Jewdom; he will flatten the Temple in exact fulfillment of Jesus prediction and he will destroy Jerusalem, uprooting and taking the Jews to every far-flung corner of the empire, thinking they would be absorbed and erased as a people, never to rise again; the only thing Caesar, and Satan, will not have taken into account is the fact that God is Faithful and True to His Word; He had made specific promises to Israel and He would never fail to fulfill all His Will:

'I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:' Isaiah 46:9

All the World, for more than 18 centuries, will believe that Israel had been erased; Catholicism will teach that their false system will have taken the place of Israel and would be the recipient of all God's Promises but True Believers always knew that someday God would raise Israel back up from the ashes as He prophesied through Ezekiel Chapters 36-37.

...meanwhile, back in the city... Festus meets with the Jews who immediately begin to rail again against Paul; having failed to convince Felix; perhaps Festus will be more amiable to reason... if they could only get Festus to send Paul back to Jerusalem from Caesarea... well... then they'd finally have him!

Wile E. Coyote hides again; waiting for the Roadrunner... this time for sure!!

Verse 4: *'But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither.'*

Verse 5: *'Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.'*

Man up! You claim to have all this evidence of Paul's deserving of death... come with me... accuse him to his face... let him face you!

Felix had, doubtless, told Festus all about these wiley Jews, how they schemed and planned, how they sought to circumvent Roman Law; Paul is a Roman citizen who, therefore, has the right to face his accusers. Festus will not listen to them; he shows, at least, that much integrity as their ruler. Remember, Felix has kept Paul confined for 2 years, calling him often, hoping for a financial bribe... hopefully, Festus will be different...

Verse 6: *'And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought.'*

He stayed in Jerusalem for a week and a half, probably beginning to familiarize himself with the inner workings of government in Jerusalem and to allow time for the Chief Priests and elders to ready themselves for the hot, dusty 57 mile trip but he probably can't wait to leave Jerusalem for the view and the clean sea air of Caesarea.

Then, the next day, he brings Paul in to hear from him.

Verse 7: *'And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, **which they could not prove.**'*

Festus occupies his seat of judgment, ready to continue to dispense the rule of Roman Law over this 'backward,' outlying province. The Jews who have come from Jerusalem immediately begin to hurl every accusation imaginable; this sounds like our modern system: the Left throws everything they can think of, hoping that at least one thing will stick...

Verse 8: *'While he (Paul) answered for himself, (saying) 'Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.'*

Paul says, 'I have not broken any law: not Jewish, not Roman and not Mosaic law; I am innocent!'

Verse 9: *'But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?'*

And, once more, like Felix: he wants to curry favor with the Jewish leadership; his work of keeping peace in this 'backward' province is made far easier if the local leadership is helping him rather than hindering him. Remember: his number one command from the emperor: Keep the peace! Above all else, Keep the Peace! He will only maintain his position and hope for advancement to a more desirable bailiwick if he can maintain the peace here.

So he asks, 'Paul: are you willing to be taken to Jerusalem, that I would adjudicate your case there?'

Verse 10: *'Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.'*

I stand before Caesar as a Roman citizen; I have done no wrong to the Jews which you, Festus, know perfectly well; since I have broken no Jewish law, they should have no jurisdiction over me; I submit to Caesar's rule.

Verse 11: *'For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.'*

If I were guilty, I would be willing to die for my crime but since I am innocent, I should not be delivered unto these lying, murderous Jews; I appeal to Caesar!

As a Roman Citizen, Paul had the right to demand to be heard by Caesar himself; therefore to Caesar he will go! God had told him in a vision that he would be taken up to Rome where he would witness in the heart of the Empire.