

Acts

Memorize the TRUTH!

Lesson 23 Paul Before Felix Acts 24

I strive always to keep my conscience
clear before God and man.
Acts 24:16

Charges Against Paul – Acts 24:1-10

1. Who were the people bringing charges against Paul?
2. How would you describe Tertullus' attitude toward Felix?
3. List the charges Tertullus brought against Paul.
4. According to verse 10, what was Paul's state of mind as he started his defense?

Day 1

Learn the TRUTH!



In spite of the many offenses Paul had committed, he had a clear conscience because he had been forgiven by Christ.

... I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.
1 Timothy 1:16

Paul's Defense – Acts 24:11-21

5. a. Read the following verses and state the main idea in your own words.
2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Philippians 4:11

b. What do these verses teach you about facing adversity?
6. What did Paul "admit" in verses 14-16?
7. What reasons did Paul give for going to Jerusalem?

Day 2

Paul's Defense Continued
Acts 24:11-21

Day 3

8. How did Paul answer each of these charges?
troublemaker

promoter of riots

ringleader of the Nazarene sect

desecrator of the temple

9. Read Romans 1:4-6. Why do you think the
"resurrection of the dead" is so important?

Placed in Custody
Acts 24:22-27

Day 4

10. Describe Paul's living conditions while he was
in custody.

11. Why do think Felix postponed making a
decision about Paul?

12. a. What did Paul discuss with Felix and his
wife?

b. Why do you think Felix became afraid
when he heard Paul's teaching?

13. What might you learn about witnessing from
Paul's example with Felix?

A Clear Conscience
Selected Verses

Day 5

14. What is the definition of the word *conscience*?

15. What do these verses teach about how our conscience
can be clear?

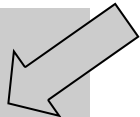
2 Corinthians 1:12

1 Timothy 1:5

Hebrews 13:18

16. Why is it so important to have a clear conscience?

Live the TRUTH!



Paul provides a wonderful example of being faithful to God when in a position of waiting. In what areas of your life are you now waiting on God to work? What is your attitude as you wait? Are you resting in the Lord, expecting Him to work? Or are you restless, impatient and frustrated? What can you learn from Paul's example in this lesson so this time of waiting in your life is honoring to God?

Commentary Acts Lesson 23

The Case Against Paul: Ananias and some elders from the Sanhedrin arrived in Caesarea five days after Paul. They were accompanied by their legal consultant, Tertullus, who became the spokesman for the prosecution because of his familiarity with the Roman judicial procedure. Tertullus began his speech with lavish praise of Felix, and ended by accusing Paul of being a troublemaker, an instigator of riots among Jews all over the world, a ringleader of the Nazarene sect and a would-be desecrater of the temple. The accusations were in general terms, like those used when Christ was accused before Pilate (Luke 23:2). He said the Jews had wanted to judge Paul according to their law but Lysias had taken him out of their hands and ordered the accusers to appear before the governor. (Note that verses 6b-8a are found in text notes in some versions of the Bible.) The rest of the visitors from Jerusalem join in the accusations.

The accusers want Felix to question Paul regarding the “truth” and to verify their charges. Concerning the idea of truth, author C. S. Lewis once said: “Christianity, if false is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.” Pilate, face to face with God in the person of Jesus, asked him: “What is truth?” (John 18:38). Members of the Sanhedrin, face to face with God’s chosen servant, Paul, were blind to the truth (Acts 24:8). Even while living with Jesus, the disciples did not always fully understand His truth (Luke 9:28-36). We face the truth whenever we read the Scriptures, or hear a Bible-based sermon. But like other followers of the Way before us, including the disciples, just being in the presence of God or His chosen servants does not guarantee our understanding of truth. Truth comes from God through His Holy Spirit. It speaks to our conscience and guides us when we allow it into our hearts. We must diligently guard our hearts against deception or else we risk becoming like those who persecuted Paul. Ask the Holy Spirit for discernment and guidance as you study or listen to God’s Word.

Felix Listens to Paul: Speaking courteously but without flattery, Paul suggested that nine years experience in the region would enable Felix to judge fairly, so he, Paul, will “gladly” make his defense (24:10). Paul’s choice of the word “gladly” indicated confidence and eagerness. He denied the accusations against him, saying he had been in Jerusalem no more than 12 days and had no time to organize an insurrection even if he had wanted to. He had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost and to bring offerings. He had neither engaged in arguments nor stirred up a crowd; his behavior had been quiet, reverent and orthodox. Paul acknowledged belonging to a group called the Way but stated they worship the God of the fathers who revealed Himself in the Old Testament. He asserted he was not a member of a cult; and what he believed was not heresy. He had always taken pains to have a clear conscience before God and people (24:16). Paul concluded by stating his firm belief in the resurrection of the dead, when God will judge all people.

Check It Out:

Felix thought about and discussed spiritual matters, but he never arrived at a decision. He is like many people today — willing to discuss religion, but reluctant to put their trust in Jesus Christ. Some of these people just enjoy arguing or want to draw attention to themselves.

What can we do for seekers like Felix, who want to discuss spiritual matters but are unwilling to make a commitment? To those who will hear, we can present what God has done for the world in Christ, and what He has done for us — given us righteousness through faith in Jesus (Romans 3:22).

Paul trusted in the righteousness of Christ., He did not strive to achieve his own righteousness by following the law. His clear conscience was based on his faith in Christ and had none of the arrogance of the Jews, who relied on their own abilities to keep the law. The New Testament is clear: we are saved by faith in Christ alone. However, followers of Jesus strive for holy living as our response to the free gift of salvation. We are people who think, decide, and choose on our own, and we can refuse to obey the leading of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, when we live according to the teachings of Scripture, we realize that God enables us, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to do His will.

Paul stated that he took the Nazirite vow as an orthodox Jew, and fully accepted the Law and the prophets, an action proving his orthodoxy. Then he repeated the charge he wanted to discuss: "It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today" (24:21). Ananias was a Sadducee, and Paul was convinced the Sadducees were trying to separate Jewish Christians from the Jewish religion. If the Romans could be convinced that Christianity was an unauthorized religion, the church would be subject to persecution, not just from the Jews, but from the Romans also. The early church did not want to be severed from its roots in Judaism prematurely. Thus, Paul struggled to maintain the perception that Christianity was a legitimate fulfillment of Judaism. In the end, his view prevails, and Rome protected the young church until the new movement grew and eventually threatened the Empire.

Felix's Verdict: Felix, very familiar with the division in Judaism over the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, postponed the case. He offered the excuse that he would have to wait to hear evidence from Lysias before passing judgment, a hearing that evidently never took place. But Felix was still interested in his prisoner for another reason. Recently he had married a young Jewish princess, Drusilla, one of three daughters of King Herod Agrippa I. Drusilla had left her first husband to marry Felix, and was his third wife. Drusilla was not present at the trial, but hearing of Paul, she was curious and wished an audience with him. Felix ordered Paul brought to the court chamber to speak with her. Paul began a discourse on righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come. However, Felix, remembering his own past actions, found the ethical implications of the Christian faith too personally convicting. He interrupted the talk, saying he would call for Paul to return at a more convenient time.

Felix had many private talks with Paul, although they were likely not about faith in Jesus. Verse 26 states he sent for him often, implying to Paul that a bribe to gain his freedom would be acceptable. Felix might have thought Paul had access to financial resources or that he could call on his Nazarene friends to supply them. Paul refused to be part of such an arrangement, so Felix kept Paul in custody, his case unsettled, for the remaining two years of his term of office. Since he was unable to extract a bribe from Paul, he did the politically correct thing and pleased the Jews by keeping him a prisoner. To his credit, he did arrange for Paul to have good treatment and allowed him unlimited visitors.



Felix appears in Scripture in this chapter and, having played his small role, is never mentioned again. He was a man who thought about and discussed spiritual matters, but never arrived at a decision. For two years he continued to send for Paul – probably to hint for a bribe. Paul would have seized every opportunity to present Christ, but Felix is like many today – willing to discuss religion, but reluctant to act, and he fails to make the most important decision a person will ever make – to trust oneself to Christ.