

## ACTS CHAPTER 24



Photo 41. King Herod's sea palace aerial in Ceasarea

### ***Paul before Felix (Acts 24:1-27)***

Now after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and an attorney named Tertullus, and they brought charges against Paul to the governor.

After Paul had been summoned, Tertullus began accusing him, saying to the governor,

“Since we have attained great peace through you, and since reforms are being carried out for this nation by your foresight, we acknowledge this in every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. But, that I may not weary you further, I beg you to grant us a brief hearing, by your kindness.”

*Why did Tertullus not praise Felix for integrity, justice or benevolence? The looks on the faces of the Jewish elders (who thoroughly detested the wicked Felix) might have betrayed his insincerity and angered the governor, so he lauded him instead for the “peace” which Judea, in some measure, had enjoyed under his reign, and the “reforms.”*

“For we have found this man a public menace and one who stirs up dissensions among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. And he even tried to desecrate the temple, so indeed we arrested him. By interrogating him yourself concerning all these matters, you will be able to ascertain the things of which we are accusing him.”

*What strategy did the prosecution employ? They made three charges against him: one of sedition, against Roman law, another of heresy, against Hebrew law, and a third of sacrilege, against both. According to the second charge, Paul was supposed to have been “a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes”, a contemptuous term for the believers in Christ. Paul was something higher than the “ringleader” of a “sect.” He merely proclaimed the truth about Christ and this was supposed to be heresy against the law of Moses which, in turn, Rome had pledged itself to respect.*



The Jews also joined in the attack, asserting that these things were so.

And when the governor had nodded for him to speak, Paul responded:

“Knowing that for many years you have been a judge to this nation, I cheerfully make my defense, since you can take note of the fact that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. And neither in the temple did they find me carrying on a discussion with anyone or causing a riot, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city itself. Nor can they prove to you the things of which they now accuse me.”

*How did Paul deal with the charge of sedition? Granted, the feast time of Pentecost might have been chosen as an opportune time to stir up sedition, but Paul effectively disposes of such a possibility by pointing out that they had not found him disputing or stirring up the people, either in the temple or in the synagogues or anywhere in the city.*





“But I confess this to you, that in accordance with the Way, which they call a sect, I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and is written in the Prophets; having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. In view of this I also do my best to maintain a blameless conscience both before God and before other people, always.”

*How did the apostle Paul answer the charge of heresy? He explains that faith in Christ was not apostasy from the Old Testament Scriptures but obedience to them. They were the heretics for refusing to believe the Scriptures and for rejecting their own Messiah. The great issue between Israel and Paul was no longer theological, but moral. They had by now been surrounded by overwhelming proof that Jesus was “the Christ, the Son of God,” but in spite of it all they still stubbornly rejected Him. They were violating their consciences and closing their eyes to the truth.*

“Now after several years I came to bring charitable gifts to my nation and to present offerings, in which they found me occupied in the temple, having been purified, without any crowd or uproar.”

*How did the apostle Paul answer the charge of sacrilege? He had come to bring alms and offerings to his nation; why would he profane their temple? Indeed, his enemies had found him “purified” in the temple, “without any crowd or uproar.”*

“But there were some Jews from Asia— who ought to have been present before you and to have been bringing charges, if they should have anything against me. Or else have these men themselves declare what violation they discovered when I stood before the Council, other than in regard to this one declaration which I shouted while standing among them, ‘For the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you today!’”



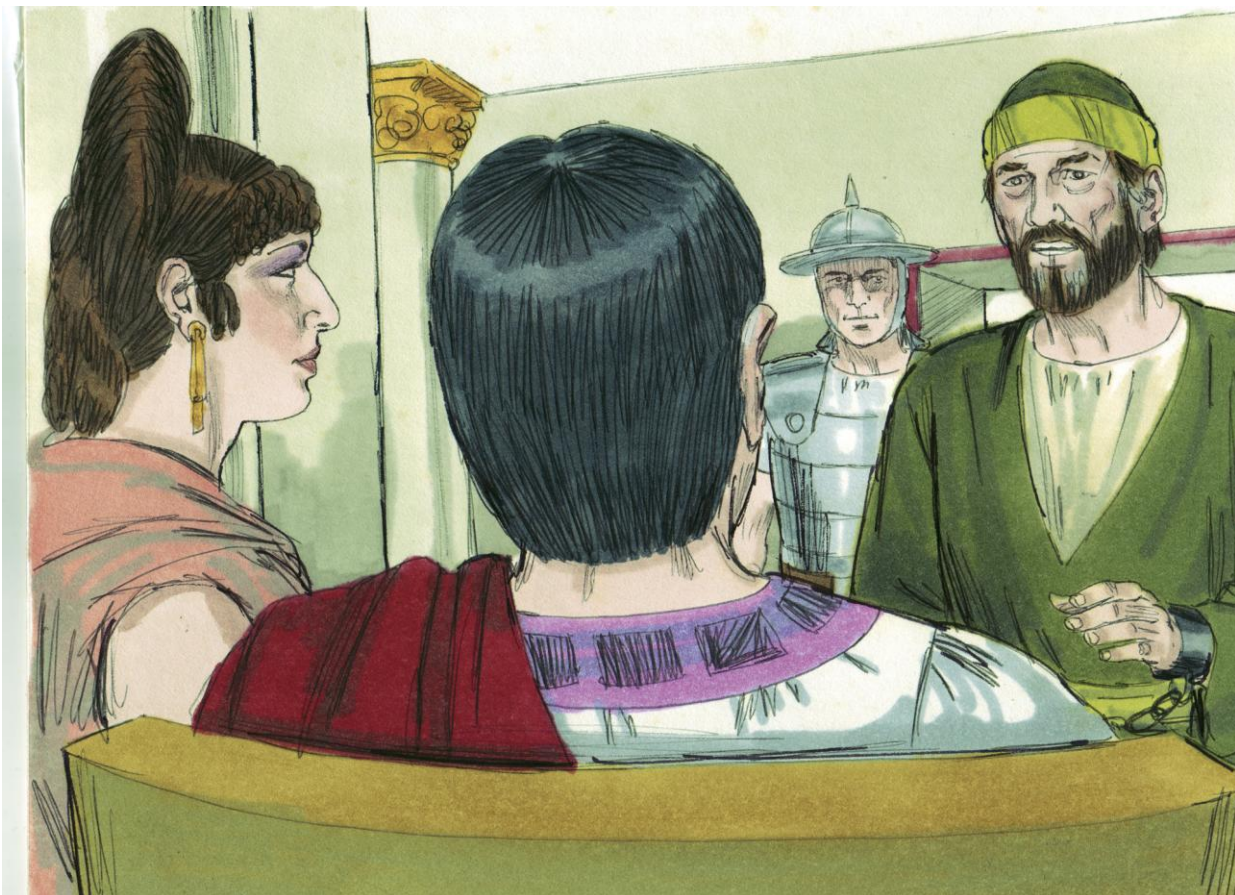
*Why were the Jews from Asia not present to testify against Paul? They had no case against him. Neither did the rulers of Judaea or they would have accepted his challenge to tell what evil doing they had found in him.*

But Felix, having quite accurate knowledge about the Way, adjourned them, saying, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case."

He gave orders to the centurion for Paul to be kept in custody and yet have some freedom, and allow his friends to take care of his needs.

Now some days later Felix arrived with Drusilla his wife, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus.

*Who was Drusilla? She was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I (of Act 12) and was a little girl at the time her father had accepted worship as a god and had been suddenly stricken dead. She would naturally be interested in Paul's case.*



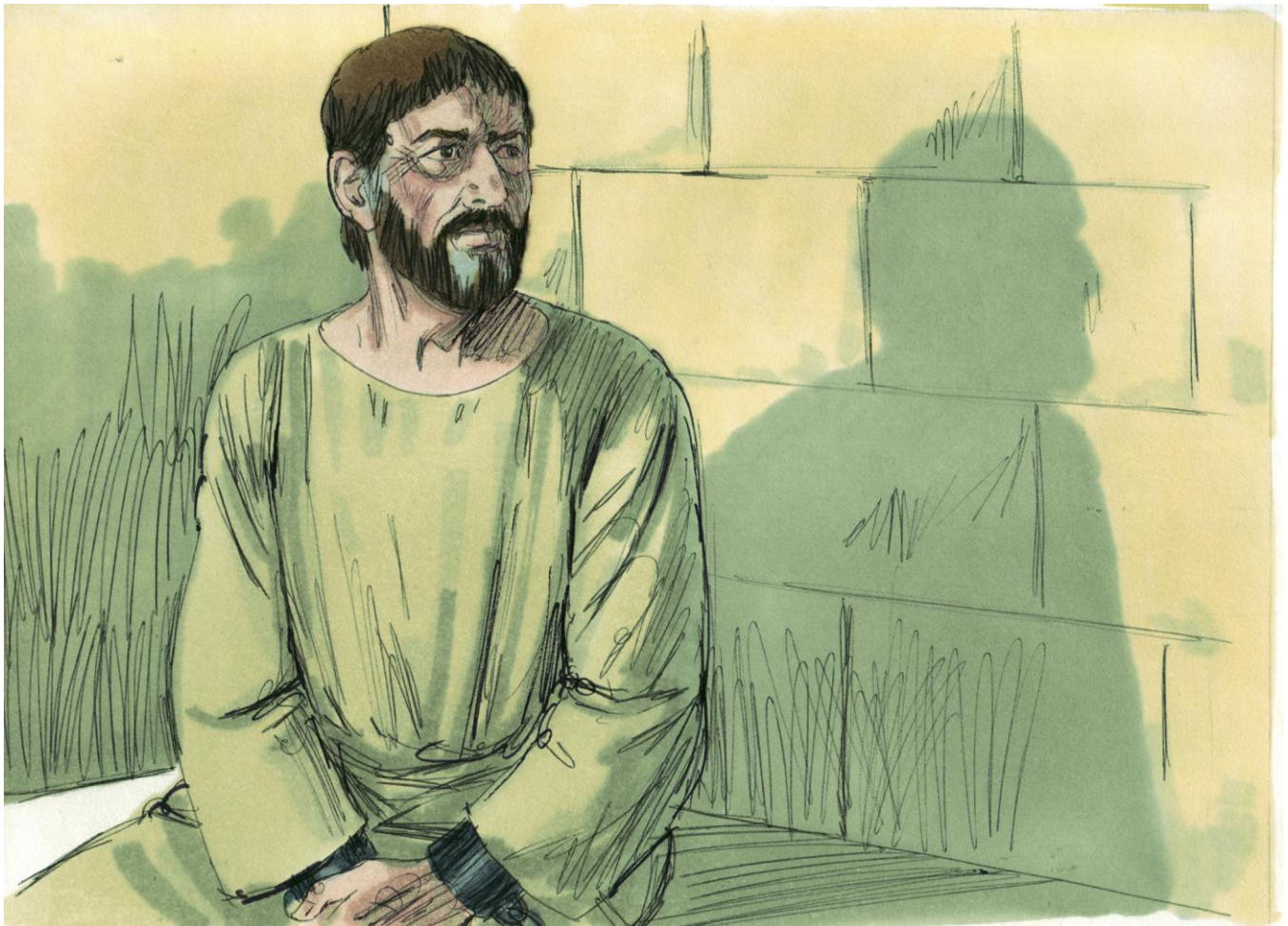
But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and responded, “Go away for now, and when I have an opportunity, I will summon you.”

*How did Paul show Felix and Drusilla the urgency of their need for salvation? He proceeded to a subject not discussed by the philosophers of the day, but only in the Hebrew Scriptures: the “judgment to come.” Felix had already learned of the apostle’s convictions as to this, for his declaration that there would be “a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked” carried the direct implication that those thus raised would be called to account before God. But now the apostle pressed the truth home, doubtless by citing passages from the Holy Scriptures, until the governor became so alarmed that he suddenly cut the interview short.*



*What sharp contrast is there between Felix and the Philippian jailor? The Philippian jailor, trembling, asked: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" with the result that he was gloriously saved. But Felix, trembling, sent the man of God away, promising to hear him further when he should find an opportunity. In this he has had multitudes of followers who, convinced by the Spirit of their sin and need, have resisted instead of yielding, hoping for another chance.*

At the same time Felix was also hoping that money would be given to him by Paul; therefore he also used to send for him quite often and talk with him. But after two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul imprisoned.





## **QUESTIONS OF ACTS CHAPTER 24**

ALL ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND IN THE TEXT OF CHAPTER 24

1. After how many days came the high priest Ananias down with some elders and an attorney named Tertullus?

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2. What was the first charge against Paul?

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3. What was the second charge against Paul?

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4. What was the third charge against Paul?

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5. How did Paul deal with the charge of sedition?

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6. How did the apostle Paul answer the charge of heresy?

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7. How did the apostle Paul answer the charge of sacrilege?

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8. What did Felix do after he arrived some days later with Drusilla his wife, who was Jewish?

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9. What did Paul discuss during the interview with Felix and Drusilla?

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10. Why used Felix to send for Paul quite often and talk to him?

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## **ACTS CHAPTER 24 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)**

### ***Paul before Felix***

**1**Now after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and an attorney named Tertullus, and they **[a]**brought charges against Paul to the governor. **2**After **[b]**Paul had been summoned, Tertullus began accusing him, saying to *the governor*,

“Since we have attained great peace through you, and since reforms are being carried out for this nation by your foresight, **3**we acknowledge *this* in every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. **4**But, that I may not **[c]**weary you further, I beg you **[d]**to grant us a brief hearing, by your kindness. **5**For we have found this man a public menace and one who stirs up dissensions among all the Jews throughout **[e]**the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. **6**And he even tried to desecrate the temple, so indeed we arrested him. **[f]****8**By interrogating him yourself concerning all these matters, you will be able to ascertain the things of which we are accusing him.” **9**The Jews also joined in the attack, asserting that these things were so.

**10**And when the governor had nodded for him to speak, Paul responded:

“Knowing that for many years you have been a judge to this nation, I cheerfully make my defense, **11**since you can take note of the fact that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. **12**And neither in the temple did they find me carrying on a discussion with anyone or causing **[g]**a riot, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city *itself*. **13**Nor can they prove to you the *things* of which they now accuse me. **14**But I confess this to you, that in accordance with **[h]**the Way, which they call a sect, I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and is written in the Prophets; **15**having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. **16**In view of this I also do my best to maintain a blameless conscience *both* before God and before *other* people, always. **17**Now after several years I came to bring charitable gifts to my nation and to present offerings, **18**in which they found me *occupied* in the temple, having been purified, without any crowd or uproar. But *there were* some Jews from **[i]**Asia— **19**who ought to have been present before you and to have been bringing charges, if they should have anything against me. **20**Or *else* have these men themselves declare what violation they discovered when I stood before the **[j]**Council, **21**other than in regard to this one declaration which I shouted while standing among them, ‘For the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you today!’”

**22**But Felix, **[k]**having quite accurate knowledge about **[l]**the Way, adjourned them, saying, “When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case.” **23**He gave orders to the centurion for **[m]**Paul to be kept in custody and *yet* have *some* freedom, and not to prevent any of his friends from providing for his needs.

**24**Now some days later Felix arrived with Drusilla his **[n]**wife, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him *speak* about faith in Christ Jesus. **25**But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and responded, “Go away for now, and when I have an opportunity, I will summon you.” **26**At the same time he was also hoping that money would be given to him by Paul; therefore he also used to send for him quite often and talk with him. **27**But after two years had passed, Felix **[o]**was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul imprisoned.

Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE(r),

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