

## A Study in Acts

### Chapter Twenty-Four – Paul’s Defense Before Felix.

#### ACTS 24:1-21:

In our previous lesson, the commander of the garrison in Jerusalem was made aware of a plot to assassinate Paul. He has transferred Paul to Caesarea and to the custody of the Governor. In this lesson, we will be brought into the presence of the governor and all those who have come from Jerusalem to lay before him the charges against Paul.

#### Text #1

**Acts 24:1** “*Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator named Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul.*”

**Tertullus** – A professional advocate. His name is Latin, which indicates he is Roman. Obviously, the Jews have hired him to bring charges against Paul to the Roman governor.

#### Text #2

**Acts 24:2-9** “**And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: “Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, <sup>3</sup> we accept *it* always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. <sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us. <sup>5</sup> For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. <sup>6</sup> He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law. <sup>7</sup> But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took *him* out of our hands, <sup>8</sup> commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him.” <sup>9</sup> And the Jews also assented, maintaining that these things were so.”**

#### Charges –

**First**, Paul is a plague! Greek, ‘*Loimos*’, a pestilent fellow.

**Second**, he is a creator of dissension. This we have witnessed in all of his defenses to this point.

**Third**, he is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. It is interesting that he uses the term sect, as in a split off of Judaism.

**Fourth**, that he profaned the temple, which was the original accusation.

Tertullus also accuses the commander of the Roman garrison of heavy-handed tactics in taking Paul from them and sending him to Caesarea. At the conclusion of his opening statements the rest of the Jews joined in the attack in unison.

### Text #3

#### Acts 24:10-13

**The Defense Before Felix – Point #1.** *“Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered: “Inasmuch as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself,<sup>11</sup> because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship.<sup>12</sup> And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city.<sup>13</sup> Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me.””*

Paul’s first point in his own defense is simply that he has not been here long enough to be the troublemaker they accuse him to be. He will come back to the topic of the temple later, so we will look at that then.

In **Chapter 21:17** he came to Jerusalem; this would be the starting point. Then follow Luke’s succession to this point – **21:18** (2); **21:26** (3); **22:24** (imprisoned that day); **22:30** (4); **23:11** (5), **12** (6), **23** (same night), **32** (7); **24:1** (12).

### Text #4

**Acts 24:14-16 The Defense Before Felix – Point #2.** *“But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.<sup>15</sup> I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of *the* dead, both of *the* just and *the* unjust.<sup>16</sup> This *being* so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.”*

Paul continues his defense with the fact that he is not a ringleader, but in fact a simple believing servant. Have you ever noticed that these first century servants of God in Christ Jesus, no matter the role they had been given in serving, never sought personal recognition for their service? Paul never sought the title, ‘Reverend’, or ‘Father’. In fact, the only title he ever declared concerning himself we see used to demand that the brethren in Corinth follow Christ and not men, note:

**1 Corinthians 4:1-2** *“Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.<sup>2</sup> Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”*

He additionally demands, unlike his accusers, that it was an attitude of God’s will above his own that has brought him to this service (the definition of an educated conscience).

### Text #5

**Acts 24:17-19 The Defense Before Felix – Point #3.** *“Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation,<sup>18</sup> in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor with tumult.<sup>19</sup> They ought to have been here before you to object if they had anything against me.”*

Paul now addresses the false accusation that was brought from the beginning of all of this and simply states that he was in the temple purified, which means that a gentile could not have been with him. He additionally notes that none of the original accusers were present.

#### **Text #6**

**Acts 24:20-21 The Defense Before Felix – Conclusion.** *“Or else let those who are here themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council, <sup>21</sup> unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, ‘Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.’ ”*”

In conclusion, he demands, as their own law does, that if there is actually any eyewitness of any wrongdoing let them testify. He knows that some of the Jews that have come to accuse him are of the sect of the Pharisees, so he re-introduces the subject that caused them to erupt against the Sadducees, not Paul. This time, it is apparent, they kept to themselves.