

“THIS MAN A PLAGUE”

Acts 24:1-21, ESV

INTRODUCTION: In this passage, the corrupt Ananias has arrived in Caesarea with his entourage for the occasion of bearing witness against Paul. They came “loaded for bear” to unleash their case before Felix (a historically abhorrent, brutal man), the governor of Judea. The accusations levied at Paul were based on outright distortions of the truth. Vance Havner once quipped, “*Wherever Paul went, there was either a riot or a revival!*” Finally, Paul has the opportunity to articulate his defense before Felix.

Following the Flow of the Text:

v. 1...General Information

1). Ananias arrives with his delegation (certain elders representing the Sanhedrin, an attorney, Tertullus).

v. 2-8...Tertullus’ Speech

Introduction and customary, yet, “over-the-top” **flattery** (v. 2-4)

A statement of the charges against Paul (v. 5, 6):

- ❖ This man a **plague** (a public pest, troublemaker, source of mischief)
- ❖ He stirs up riots among the Jews worldwide
- ❖ **Ringleader** of the sect of the Nazarenes (a contemptuous reference to Christianity)
- ❖ He attempted to **profane** the temple

Conclusion (v. 8). And, in **verse nine**, the Jews affirmed the statements made against Paul.

v. 10-21...Paul’s Defense

Introduction without flattery

A statement concerning the charges against him (v. 11-16) [personal, political, and doctrinal]

- ❖ His accusers could not **prove** what they are saying (v. 11-13)
- ❖ As for being a **Christian**, yes (v. 14-16)! I worship the God of our fathers. I believe and yield to what is written in the Law and the Prophets. I have put my hope in God and believe in the **resurrection** of both the just and unjust. I have a clear conscience before God and man.

Explanation of what really happened in Jerusalem (v. 17-21):

- ❖ I returned to Jerusalem with an **offering** to help the poor.
- ❖ I was **ceremonially** clean when they found me in the Temple, without crowd or uproar.
- ❖ It was the Asian Jews (not present at this defense) who created the **disturbance** (v. 19).
- ❖ What **crime**, wrongdoing had the Sanhedrin found in him when Paul stood before them in Jerusalem (v. 20-21)?

Key Declaration (v. 21).

“It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am no trial before you this day.”

Belief in the **resurrection was not a crime under either Jewish or Roman law.

** Paul was not **responsible** for the longstanding feud between the Sadducees and Pharisees over the issue of the resurrection when he made these statements in relation to such.

Key Takeaway: Paul rarely missed an opportunity to bear witness of Christ!