

The Acts of the Apostles

An Inconvenient Season: Acts 24:1-27

Acts 24:1-9: *“¹ And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul. ² And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, ³ We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. ⁴ Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words. ⁵ For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: ⁶ Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. ⁷ But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, ⁸ Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him. ⁹ And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.”*

- The 470 centurions safely transported Paul on the two-day (roughly 65-mile) journey to Felix. After another five days passed, Ananias, other members of the Sanhedrin, and what the King James Version calls an orator (or lawyer), named Tertullus, arrives for the Roman trial.
- Tertullus begins his accusation against Paul with complimentary words toward Felix in a seeming attempt to influence him. One can also interpret the phrase, “*Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietnes...*” as semi-threatening words, since his clients are powerful men who could affect the stability of Judea and especially Jerusalem.
- His charges against Paul are the following:
 - He is a menace to the people of Jerusalem.
 - He stirs up dissension among all of the Jews throughout the world.
 - He is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes (which evidently had a bad reputation since the time of Pentecost).
 - He has profaned the temple.
- All of these accusations fail to demonstrate how Paul broke a specific Roman law, nor did they give supporting evidence to each claim. The attorney continues by noting how the Jews were going to “judge him” by their law, but Captain Lysias “*came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come unto thee...*” Conveniently, Tertullus neglects to tell Felix any specific crime Paul broke, how the Jewish mob began beating Paul to death without a trial, and how Lysias almost beat a Roman citizen without a trial.
- Tertullus then defers judgment to Felix whom he suspects will find Paul guilty of these charges. Other Jews testified that what Tertullus said was true.

Additional Notes:

Acts 24:10-21: 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: ¹¹ 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. 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. ¹⁶ And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void to offence toward God, and toward men. ¹⁷ Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. ¹⁸ Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult. ¹⁹ Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me. ²⁰ Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council, ²¹ 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.”

- Paul immediately challenges the allegations Tertullus made against him. He notes that he was not disputing with anyone or creating a rebellion, either in the temple or synagogues. He further states that no proof can be offered to counter his claims.
- Paul gets to the heart of the trial when he confesses to being a follower of “the Way,” worshiping the God of the Jews, believing everything written by the prophets, and repeating his claim from the last chapter involving their mutual belief in the resurrection of the dead.
- After stating the real reasons Paul was indicted, he continues by stating that his original desire when coming to Jerusalem was to, “bring alms to my nation, and offerings.” While

he was doing that in the temple, Jews from Asia grabbed him and began beating him. Paul claims that those Jews from Asia should be present at this hearing if they objected to his retelling of the events.

Additional Notes:

Acts 24:22-27: *“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. 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. ²⁴ 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. ²⁵ And as he reasoned 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. ²⁶ He 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. ²⁷ But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.”*

- Rather than settle the matter, Felix defers it until Lysias was able to come to him. In the meantime, Paul was to be on house arrest, with a centurion supervising him. The officer was instructed to let all of his acquaintances come to him. I infer from these events, and from the information we learn at the end of this chapter, that the outcome of the case favored Paul, but Felix did not want to settle the matter against the Jewish leaders for political reasons.
- Paul stayed in Caesarea for two years waiting for the verdict. Shortly after the trial, Felix and Drusilla (Felix's wife who was a Jew), sent for Paul to hear about faith in Christ. This undoubtedly had an effect on Felix as it says, *“And as he [Paul] reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled...”*
 - Why do you think Paul spoke about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come?
 - Does this scenario strike you more as a conversation or sermon? Do you think conversations are preferable in evangelistic efforts? Why?

- In the NASB, Felix says, “...*Go away for now, and when I have an opportunity, I will summon you.*” How do you interpret Felix’s response?
- Felix also hoped that Paul would give him money for his release, so he called him often. Since Paul seemed to have so many followers throughout the world, it seems to me like Felix thought this “famous” religious leader would be able to supply him with a great pay off for his release.
- After two years of house arrest, Festus replaced Felix, and left Paul bound as a favor to the Jews.
- Final Note: Paul’s role in the Kingdom of the Lord has dramatically changed. For the early part of his ministry he was an evangelist/missionary. He transitions into a teacher/pastor/missionary. Now, he is a writer/evangelist/example setter. God used his life for the Christians that witnessed the boldness of his faith, but has also used it for numberless Christians throughout the ages suffering persecution. Paul’s courage, composure, resolve, determination, and eternal mindset still resonates throughout the world. Inevitably our life will transition from one season to another. These seasons all have a spiritual side that should not be ignored. We must willingly adapt to the vocation to which God calls us, even in dire circumstances. Thank the Lord for the example of our dear brother, Paul the apostle.

Additional Notes:
