

LESSON TEN

(24:1-27)

The Voyage To Rome In Caesara 24:1-27

24 *And after five days the high priest hear you when your accusers arrive.”*
And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod’s praetorium. Ananias came down with some elders and a spokesman, one Tertullus. They laid before the governor their case against Paul; 2 and when he was called, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying:
“Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since by your provision, most excellent Felix, reforms are introduced on behalf of this nation, 3 in every way and everywhere we accept this with all gratitude. 4 But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly. 5 For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6 He even tried to profane the temple, but we seized him. 8 By examining him yourself you will be able to learn from him about everything of which we accuse him.”
9 The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all this was so.
10 And when the governor had motioned to him to speak, Paul replied:
“Realizing that for many years you have been judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense. 11 As you may ascertain, it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem; 12 and they did not find me disputing with any one or stirring up a crowd, either in the temple or in the synagogues, or in the city. 13 Neither can they prove to you what they now bringing up against me. 14 But this I admit to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the law or written in the prophets, 15 having a hope in God which these themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. 16 So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward God and toward men. 17 Now after some years I came to bring to my nation alms and offerings. 18 As I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or tumult. But some Jews from Asia -
19 they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, if they have anything against me. 20 Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, 21 except this one thing which I cried out while standing among them, ‘With respect to the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you this day.’ ”
22 But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, put him off, saying, “When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case.” 23 Then he gave orders to the centurion that he should be kept in custody but should have some liberty, and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs.
24 After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess; and he sent for Paul and heard him speak upon faith in Christ Jesus. 25 And as he argued about justice and self-control and future judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, “Go away for the present; when I have an opportunity I will summon you.” 26 At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. So he sent for him often and conversed

with him. 27 But when two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

24:1 - **spokesman** - our word orator. The Jews had hired legal counsel to present their case, someone who would understand proceedings in a Roman court, etc. It was his business to inform Felix about Paul. As the account shows, the “witnesses” were not brought to the trial, and the charges thus could not be proved.

V. 2 - Some historians tell a different story about Felix than Tertullus relates, that Felix was the cause of much trouble.

to accuse - Our English word “categorize” is a transliteration of the Greek word.

most excellent - The same Greek term used to describe Theophilus in Luke 1:3.

V. 4 - Tertullus said, “We will cut it short so as not to hinder your good work, etc.” The word for “kindness” denotes what is reasonable and fair and is a virtue to be found in Christians, I Tim. 3:3; Titus 3:2; James 3:17 and I Peter 2:18.

V. 5 - **Pestilent** - Paul caused lots of trouble, including being a trouble-maker among the Jews, especially in the sense that he had started a sect in Judaism. These general charges were intended to make Felix realize that Paul was opposed to the Roman peace and the standing Jewish Hierarchy, and thus someone who should be eliminated from the scene.

Nazarene - Jesus was to be called such, Matt. 2:23, and his followers evidently were so labeled.

No connection can be found between the name Nazarene and the concept of the Nazirite of Numbers 6. Matt. 2:23 seems to be a summation of “prophets” rather than a prophet, per se.

The Hebrew roots are not the same for the two words. Since Jesus identified himself as being from Nazareth (Acts 22:8) it seems probable that the identification of this followers as Nazarenes is in reference to that idea, not to the idea of a Nazirite. The Hebrew root (word) that is used in Isaiah 11:1 to refer to Jesus means root/offshoot, etc., whereas the Hebrew root in Numbers 6 means to consecrate, or separate. As far as the town of Nazareth is concerned, its origin is unknown, so we can not draw any help from that source.

V. 6 - The accusation in 21:28 was to make common the temple, which was sacred (i.e., had been sanctified to Jewish use only). That the Jews had arrested Paul was not true; rather they had tried to kill him without any hearing at all.

tried to - The Greek term is often used in the sense of test or tempt.

[NOTE: The RSV text does not contain verse 7.]

V. 8 - A thorough testing by Felix would reveal the true facts about Paul. Perhaps Felix thought that Paul's true nature and feelings would surface under questioning. If so, he was wrong.

V. 10 - Paul's defense (English apology transliterates the Greek word) begins and though the charges made against him were somewhat vague, he answered them one by one, v. 11-21. He denied the charge of insurrection; which would have been the main concern to Felix. Because v. 21 gives the real ground of difference, the issue was clearly a matter of interpretation. Recall that Gallio had surmised the same point, 18:14ff.

V. 11 - Since Tertullus had spoken of "knowing," Paul affirmed that Felix could know certain things, which he proceeded to state, denying the accusations against him. "In only twelve days, very little could have been done," Paul stated.

V. 13 - The only thing Tertullus had done was accuse, without proof, Paul said. One reason was that no witnesses were present.

V. 14 - **I admit** - The Greek term is generally translated "to confess" (or "to profess" in King James Version). Tertullus had spoken of the Christians as a sect (heresy) of the Jewish faith. Paul asserted that it was the fulfillment of it, and also in the Pharisaic sense of resurrection, etc., v. 15, 21.

V. 16 - Anyone who fears God will attempt to keep the conscience pure/clean. One may discover, as did Paul, that even such attainment does not mean one's life is acceptable to God.

take pains - The Greek term has the idea of doing one's very best, thus to labor hard, or strive greatly. Our word ascetic comes from this term.

V. 17 - Rather than having done what Tertullus had said, Paul affirms the opposite: he had made every effort to be a good Jew, including the bringing of money to the Jewish nation (which may have alerted Felix to the possibility of a ransom from Paul for his release). Now if these things were so, then the basic charges against Paul were untrue. Felix so thought, and thus did not treat Paul as a troublemaker.

V. 19 - The absence of those who should have been witnesses at the trial was noted and was really an indictment of the Jewish case. Felix decided that Lysias would help clarify the matter, v. 22. In reality, if the truth were told Felix, the Jews had tried to kill Paul without any trial, and Lysias was going to scourge him without trial. Neither group would have looked too good in that case.

V. 21 - The obvious differences among those in the Sanhedrin, and known by Felix, were the only ground of accusation against Paul.

V. 22 - How Felix had obtained knowledge of Christianity is not stated. The real problem was his interest in pleasing the Jews, and wishing to receive money from Paul, v. 26. He thus put off a decision under the pretext of having Lysias come to Caesarea.

Some two years ago or better were spent in confinement. Most suppose that Luke took advantage of this time to investigate the facts about Jesus that are in his Gospel and the information needed for the early part of Acts.

V. 24 - Drusilla had been the wife of Azizus, king of Emesa, but became the third wife of Felix. Her great-grandfather was Herod the Great, her great-uncle killed John the Immerser, and her father killed James the apostle.

V. 25 - Many sermons have used this text. It surely sums up the essence of the faith and moral life of a Christian, and was an indictment of Felix and Drusilla.

V. 27 - We suppose the time was about A.D. 60-61. Some attempt to show that the time was much earlier, A.D. 55-57. We don't think the evidence is any better, if as good, for those dates as the ones suggested. It isn't of great moment in most ways. If the earlier times were so, the suggested dates for the writing of some of Paul's epistles, and the time of the events within them would be changed somewhat.

QUESTIONS

150. What important persons were not at the trial?

151. In what sense(s) were the accusations made by Tertullus against Paul both political and religious in nature?

152. Would taking a Gentile into the Jewish portion of the temple have been considered "profaning the temple"?

153. Would twelve days be sufficient time to cause an uprising?

154. Could a sharp agitator provoke all sorts of trouble while being innocent himself?

155. Is assertion of charges different from proving charges?

156. What clarification of the charge about the sect of the Nazarenes did Paul make?
157. Did Paul agree that Christianity was a sect of Judaism?
158. How much can you find in the Old Testament about a resurrection of both the just and the unjust?
159. Can one have a clear conscience and still be a sinner?
160. What conclusions did Lysias draw from the proceedings?
161. Does speaking on “faith in Christ Jesus” also include justice, self-control and future judgment?
162. Felix was alarmed. Is fear a good motivation to conversion?
163. Did Felix suppose that a ransom might be given for Paul’s release?
164. For what reason did Felix keep Paul in prison the whole two years?

ABA REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 10

1. What is the name of the lawyer who represented the Jews?
2. Summarize the arguments of the Jews against Paul and his response.
3. Who was Drusilla?

4. What three things did Paul preach about (that caused Felix to become afraid) that sum up “the essence of the faith and moral life of a Christian?”