

Acts Chapter 24 Handout

Important names: Felix, governor of Judea (52-59 ad) Drusilla (wife of Felix, sister of Agrippa) Ananias, high priest; Tertullus, Roman orator and hired prosecutor; Claudius Lysias, chief sect of the Nazarenes, the Way=Christianity; Porcius Festus, governor of Judea (59-62)

References: Acts 18-Judgement of Gallio; Acts 21:24-completion of Nazarite vow 7 days

v.1-4-After five days Ananias and the elders come with Tertullus to prosecute Paul before Felix. Note that the original accusers, the Jews from Asia, are not with them. This is against Roman practice. Tertullus opens with flattering words, that Felix was not worthy of since he was not a man of scruples, and took bribes. Also, under Felix civil unrest increased. Tertullus had no animosity for Paul; he just talks for those who pay him.

v.5-9- Tertullus argues that Paul is guilty of crimes against Roman law in order to downplay the idea of transgression of Jewish religion, in which case Rome government would not be concerned. First, he is a mover of sedition, one who incites civil unrest; secondly, he is a ringleader of a sect, implying a new group not approved by the government (Gallio ruled that this was not a new religion but an offshoot of Judaism, an approved religion); thirdly, he profaned the temple, which would cause unrest, and the Sadducees had the charge to keep order in the temple, and so they cooperated with the Roman government. Lysius took Paul away while we were in legal process. All of this, of course, was false.

v.10-21-In these next verses, Paul defends himself, correcting the the false testimony that went before. He opens not with flattery by with acknowledgement that Felix has been a judge for some years. If Paul was all they say he is, he or his name would have come before this governor at other times. Felix had no knowledge of Paul. Paul says its been 12 days since he came from Jerusalem although chapter opens with "after five days". We would add in the 7 days of purification, and so from the beginning of that time till the the present. Paul claims he was neither causing trouble in the temple, the synagogues, nor the streets, and they can't prove the contrary. But after "the way" (v.`14) I worship the God of my fathers. In this Paul makes the connection of his belief with Judaism. This is no new religion. He claims that his persecution is religious because he preaches and believes in resurrection of the dead, and in this he did not offend God or man. Then Paul explains why he came to Jerusalem: after many years to bring alms for the poor and offerings for God. While he purified himself in the temple Jews from Asia found him neither with a crowd or raising trouble. And they ought to be here to accuse me. He claimed to be here because he preached resurrection from the dead. (namely Jesus Christ).

v.22-27-Because Felix had "more perfect knowledge of THE WAY, he dismissed the trial and said he would come to a decision when Lysius arrived. He ordered him put under guard but not locked up, and not to stop his friends from visiting and ministering to him. Then several days later he and his wife Drusilla (youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I of Acts 12, sister of Bernice, maybe 18 or 19 yrs old) went where Paul was being guarded and had him sent to them. Paul talked to them about having faith in Christ, doing right, self-control and coming judgement. He sent for Paul often hoping to get offered a bribe. After two years Festus took his place. Felix was called back to Rome and Paul was still in confinement.