

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

UNDER THE EXALTED CHRIST, THE GOSPEL BEGINS TO SPREAD

THE ACTS

† THE BOOK OF ACTS

OF THE APOSTLES

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, Associated

An overview of the Book of Acts, by Given O. Blakely

ACTS 5:31-32

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Lesson #95

COMMENTARY ON: 24:1-13

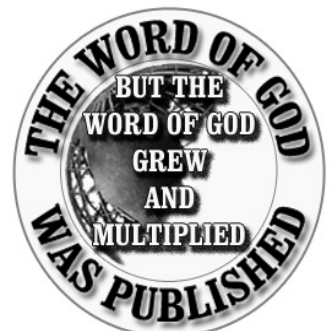
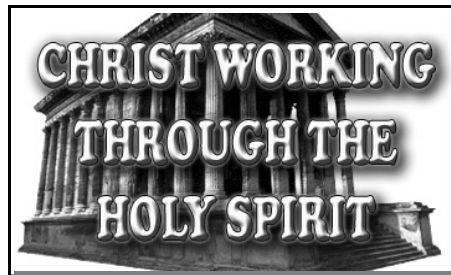
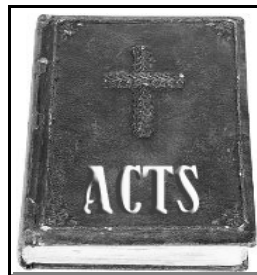
THE CHARGES AGAINST PAUL

After a five-day wait, their intentions having been providentially subverted by a Roman captain, and, as a matter of legality, the Jews now prepare to substantiate their charges against Paul. They bring an orator with them to present the case in a colorful and convincing manner. The presentation is made, with the Jews consenting to its accuracy. Now Paul is given an opportunity to answer the false charges. He commences by stating that he knows Felix has been a judge to the Jewish nation for "many years." He knows that during those years he has become familiar with Jewish manners. He also begins by saying he had only been in Jerusalem for twelve days – hardly long enough to do what the Jews have alleged – not even two weeks. The composure of Paul is evident in the manner and content of his speech. He has been prepared for this time, and fortified within by an appearance of the Lord Himself. He knows his work will not end in Judea, and thus speaks with the confidence that is birthed by faith.

ACTS 17:26-27

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us."

" . . . and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)



Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ

The Book of Acts

Lesson Number 95



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ALT = Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), **AMPLIFIED** = Amplified Bible (1965), **ASV** = American Standard Version (1901), **BBE** = Bible in Basic English (1949), **CJB** = Complete Jewish Bible (1998), **CSB** = Holman Christian Standard Bible (1999), **DARBY** = Darby Bible (1884), **DRA** = Douay-Rheims (1899), **ERV** = **English Revised Version (1885)**, **ESV** = English Stand Version (2001), **GENEVA** = Geneva Bible (1599), **GNB** = Good News (1966), **GWN** = God'S Word (1995), **IE** = International English, **ISV** = International Standard Version (1967), **JPS** = Jewish Publication Society (1917), **KJV** = King James Version (1611), **LITV** = Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), **LIVING** = Living Bible (1971), **MKJV** = Modern KJV (1962), **MONTGOMERY** = Montgomery's New Testament (2001), **MRD** = Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), **NAB** = New American Bible (2002), **NASB** = New American Standard Bible (1977), **NAU** = New American Standard Bible (1995), **NIB** = New International Bible, **NIV** = New International Version (1984), **NJB** = New Jerusalem Bible (1985), **NKJV** = New King James Version (1979), **NLT** = New Living Translation (1996), **NRSV** = New Revised Standard Version (1989), **PHILLIPS** = J B Phillips New Testament (1962), **PNT** = BISHOP'S New Testament (1595), **RSV** = Revised Standard Version (1952), **RWB** = Revised Websters (1995), **TNK** = JPS Tanakj (1985), **TYNDALE** = Tyndale's Bible (1526), **Webster** = The Webster Bible (1833), **WEYMOUTH** = Weymouth's New Testament (1903), **WILLIAMS** = William's New Testament (1937), **WYCLIFFE** = Wycliffe New Testament (1382), **YLT** = Young's Literal Translation (1862).

----- **Lexicon and Bible Translation Codes with Identification** -----
LEXICON LEGEND: **FRIEBERG** = Friberg Lexicon, **UBS** = UBS Lexicon, **LOUW-NIDA** = Louw-Nida Lexicon, **LIDDELL SCOTT** = Liddell Scott Lexicon, **THAYER** = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, **LEH** = LEH Lexicon, **GINGRICH** = Gingrich Lexicon

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF HOW THE ENTHRONED CHRIST, BY MEANS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WORKED THROUGH HIS HOLY APOSTLES AND GODLY MEN, TO SPREAD THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD, AND TO BRING EDIFICATION AND STABILITY TO MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

THE CHARGES AGAINST PAUL

“ 24:1 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. 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.” (Acts 24:1-13)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT
After a five-day wait, their intentions having been providentially subverted by a Roman captain, and, as a matter of legality, the Jews now prepare to substantiate their charges against Paul. They bring an orator with them to present the case in a colorful and convincing manner. The presentation is made, with the Jews consenting to its accuracy. Now Paul is given an opportunity to answer the false charges. He commences by stating that he knows Felix has been a judge to the Jewish nation for “many years,” He knows that during those years he has become familiar with Jewish manners. He also begins by saying he had only been in Jerusalem for twelve days – hardly long enough to do what the Jews have

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alleged – not even two weeks. The composure of Paul is evident in the manner and content of his speech. He has been prepared for this time, and fortified within by an appearance of the Lord Himself. He knows his work will not end in Judea, and thus speaks with the confidence that is birthed by faith.

THE CONSTRAINING INFLUENCE OF SPIRITUAL INSIGHT

When Paul wrote that *“the love of Christ constrains,”* he was careful to say *“us”* instead of *“me”* (2 Cor 5:14). **That is because it is the very nature of the love of Christ to constrain, compel or press the one who discerns it.** When that love is seen for what it really is, it outshines every other influence. It is superior because it is absolutely unique. There is no adversarial influence that is capable of separating us from it (Rom 8:35). That is because it is not founded on **Christ’s reaction to you personally. His love for humanity proceeds from His love for and commitment to the Father.** That is why it is said of *“the love of Christ”* that is *“passeth knowledge,”* or *“surpasses knowledge.”*^{NASB}

This is a love that passes all knowledge, or extends beyond the perimeter of natural aptitude, because it has no earthly

parallel. Christ’s love transcends a mother’s love, which is not powerful enough to guarantee she will not have compassion on the son of her love (Isa 49:15). Thus, God said of His love for His people, which is of the same class as the love of Christ, *“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me”* (Isa 49:15-16).

By faith, Paul saw more deeply into this love than others. That is why his labors were more prodigious, and his patience more exemplary. Here is his own testimony on this matter: *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me”* (Gal 2:20). This love was so compelling that it prompted Paul to forsake all competing interests, laying himself upon the altar of sacrifice. That is why he wrote, *“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord . . . That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death”* (Phil 3:7-10).

THE CONNECTION

Paul’s unparalleled devotion and endurance can be traced to the comprehension of the love of Christ. That perception is what enabled him to go through trials that were of an extraordinary nature, and do so confidently. On one occasion, when he *“despaired even of life,”* he held on his way, knowing that the sentence of death came *“that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead”* (2 Cor 1:8). Another time, when he was incarcerated, he wrote to the brethren at Philippi, *“For I know that this shall turn to*

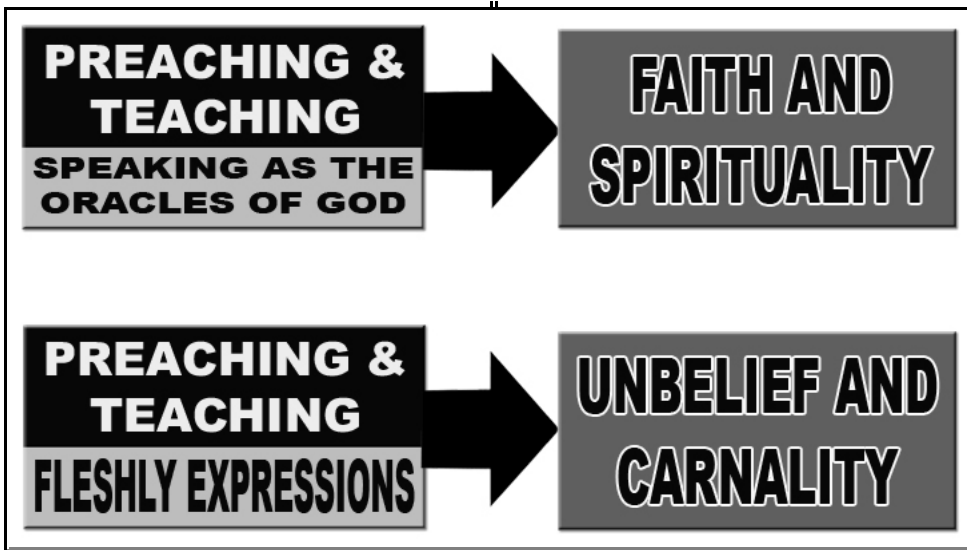
my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:19). Another time he wrote to the saints in Rome, *“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience”* (Rom 5:3). When he was given a *“thorn in the flesh”* that was of sufficient aggravation that he thrice asked for its removal, he said this: *“And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong”* (2 Cor 12:10).

All of that is being lived out in our text. That is why Paul has the presence of mind to speak wisely, act discreetly, and seize every opportunity set before him. When he was tempted, he was able to find the door of escape that accompanies every temptation (1 Cor 10:13). He maintained courage, and did not faint in the day of adversity. It is written, *“If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small”* (Prov 24:10).

The person who knows the love of Christ is the one who knows *“If God be for us, who can be against us?”* (Rom 8:31). It is the person who can *“boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me”* (Heb 13:6).

This kind of confidence, boldness, and assurance cannot be taught in the schools of men. It is not the result of forming new habits, or repeating a saying over and over. It is not the result of special training in the way to think. This is rather the result of a faith that extends into heaven itself, taking hold of the love of Christ. This is a love that convinces the heart, so that it knows beyond all controversy that *“all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who*

No person who is actually living by faith will be astounded at the composure of Paul. They know by experience how faith impacts upon the human spirit. When people are confused and astounded at the Scriptural record of the reactions of saints, they are betraying their own lack of acquaintance with a life that is lived by faith.



are the called according to his purpose” (Rom 8:28). This is a very precise statement of the cae, and can be received without fear.

No person who is actually living by faith will be astounded at the composure of Paul. They know by experience how faith impacts upon he human spirit. When people are confused and astounded at the Scriptural record of the reactions of saints, they are betraying their own lack of acquaintance with a life that is lived by faith. The foes ought not be fed with expressions that reflect consternation at the unwavering faith of Noah, Abraham, the Prophets, and the Apostles. When teachers and preachers make remarks like, “That is certainly not the way we would react,” they have fueled doubt and invited an “*evil heart of unbelief*” to enter. They have represented today’s stumbling religious generation as normal, while painting the saints of old as something like heroes. **The truth of the matter is that saints like those listed in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews represent those who really do live by faith.** The results found in their lives were not the result of super-discipline, but were the result of believing God.

Who is able to calculate the effects of sayings that concede to the flesh and represent the thinking of the carnal mind? They are not innocent, and are not to be tolerated. We have a word from God on this matter: “*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God*” (1 Pet 4:11). No person is right who claims to represent the living God, yet speaks in a manner that is out of synch with the nature of genuine spiritual life.

The consciousness of the effects of preaching, both valid and invalid, are little known these days. Many religious professionals speak more like comedians and entertainers than men of God. This is done even though the Holy Spirit has made quite clear how we are to address the saints of God. Illuminated men speak “*unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort*” (1 Cor 14:3). Not one of those objectives can be realized through speaking that appeals to the flesh. Such speech assumes the normality of carnality, unbelief, and fundamental unspirituality. However, such assumptions are a flagrant denial of the reality of regeneration, the new creation, and being born again. To attempt to placate those who

are living at a distance from God is a transgression of the greatest magnitude. No effort should be extended to make a person living in the flesh comfortable. Such people are in a state of condemnation, “*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live*” (Rom 8:13).

Spiritual words, or words that the Holy Spirit teaches (1 Cor 12:13), will never pacify the flesh. Such words are never calculated to make carnal people laugh, or worldly-minded people to feel comfortable in their state. Such things simply cannot occur when men speak “*as the oracles of God.*”

When considering a passage like the one now before us, care must be taken to get out of a merely historical mindset. Men of God like Paul are not to be considered as mere heroes living beyond the perimeter of practical spirituality. **In the case of Paul, his ministry was unique, but his manner of life was not.** After describing the way he thought about himself and living for the Lord (both of which appear to the carnal as unique), Paul said, “*Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you*” (Phil 3:15). Any other kind of mindset is not acceptable. That is why the Lord will “*reveal*” the necessity and validity of a life wholly lived for Him.

Thus, it is incumbent upon us to view this passage as an evidence of the minds and hearts of men. We are beholding the effects of religious bigotry and unbelief, as well as a life lived by faith. There is also the revelation of people who want to do what is right, even though they are not believers. Yet, they have enough understanding to want fairness for men. These various dispositions are all duly noted, controlled, and orchestrated by “*the Lord of all.*”

ANANIAS, THE ELDERS, AND TERTULLUS

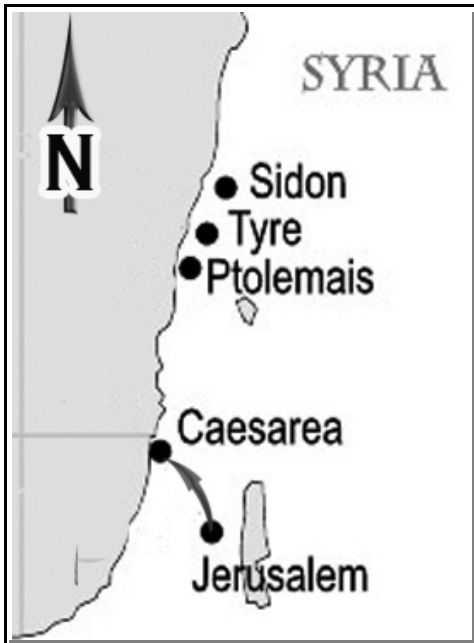
“^{24:1} *And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.*”

The Spirit now leaps over a five-day period, saying nothing about what took place during that time, whether good or bad. This again confirms that the book of Acts, strictly speaking, is not a chronological journal of the travels and experiences of holy men. **It is**

rather a record of the activities of the Head of the church, who was working through His servants to fulfill the will of God. Within that context, some matters were relevant, and some were not.

AFTER FIVE DAYS

“And after five days . . .” Other versions read, “five days later,”^{NIV} and “five days after this.”^{WEYMOUTH}



Paul was left in “Herod’s judgment hall” for this period of time. The NRSV reads that Paul was “kept under guard in Herod’s headquarters.” He was, in fact, a prisoner – whether bound or not we do not know.

ANANIAS DESCENDS WITH THE ELDERS

“Ananias the high priest descended with the elders . . .” Other versions read, “came down with,”^{NKJV} “came down to Caesarea,”^{NIV} “went to the city of Caesarea with some leaders of the people,”^{GWN} “went down,”^{MRD} “arrived with,”^{NLT} and “came down [from Jerusalem to Caesarea].”^{AMPLIFIED}

Although I have mentioned this

before, it seems appropriate to draw attention to it again. Actually, Caesarea was north of Jerusalem, yet Ananias and the elders are said to have “descended,” or “went down” to that city from Jerusalem. The phrase “UP to Jerusalem” occurs twenty-five times in Scripture (1 Kgs 12:19; 2 Kgs 12:17; 16:6; 2 Chron 2:16; Ezra 1:3; 7:13; Matt 20:17,18; 10:32-33; Lk 2:42; 18:31; 19:28; John 2:13; 5:1; 11:55; Acts 11:2; 15:2; 21:4,12,15; 24:11; 25:9; Gal 1:17,18). The phrase “down from Jerusalem” occurs four times in Scripture (Mk 3:22; Lk 10:30; Acts 8:26; 25:7).

This is not language denoting direction. It is rather the language of perspective, for Jerusalem was positioned in high places. God referred to Jerusalem as “My holy mountain, Jerusalem” (Isa 66:20). Daniel said of this city, “Thy city, Thy holy mountain” (Dan 9:16). Zechariah wrote, “Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain” (Zech 8:3). The Psalmist spoke “the mountains” that were “about Jerusalem” (Psa 126:2). The lofty heights of Jerusalem required that those going to it ascend – wherever they were coming from. Those leaving Jerusalem were required to descend – wherever they were going.

In this, Jerusalem proved to be a most accurate type of the place to which those in Christ are elevated. The epistle to the Hebrews affirms that the saved “are come to mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb 12:22). Ephesians refers to this location as the “heavenly places” where the redeemed have been made to “sit together” (Eph 2:6). Any person occupying this blessed residence must be raised up, leaving the low places of carnality, and rise higher than this present evil world. Anyone who retrogresses spiritually, allows an evil heart of belief to enter them, departing from the living God. They have to come down to do this.

Therefore, Ananias and the elders

left the high place of Jerusalem, and descended from it to the lower realm of Caesarea. They came to formally present their charges against Paul, doing so at the behest of the chief captain and Felix the governor.

A CERTAIN ORATOR

“ . . . and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.” Other versions read, “a certain attorney,”^{NASB} “a lawyer,”^{NIV} “a spokesman,”^{RSV} “an expert talker,”^{BBE} “an advocate,”^{NAB} “a pleader,”^{WEYMOUTH} “prosecuting attorney,”^{WILLIAMS} and “spokesman and counsel.”^{AMPLIFIED}

The word “orator” is translated from the Greek word ῥήτορας, which means, “a speaker, orator,”^{THAYER} “orator, public speaker; as a court speaker attorney, lawyer,”^{FRIBERG} and “one who speaks in court as an attorney or advocate (either for the prosecution or for the defense) - ‘lawyer, attorney, advocate.”^{LOUW-NIDA} The idea here is that of a speaker that lays forth a case in an expert or skilled manner. He was probably knowledgeable of Roman court procedures, as well as being skilled in both the Greek and Latin languages.

The name Tertullus is a Roman name, and the man was probably a Roman. Such a man, together with the Jewish officials, was thought to tip the scales in favor of the Jews. **To a accused person who was not of faith, it would have been an intimidating situation.** But this was certainly not the case with Paul. He could say with David, “Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident” (Psa 27:3). Faith neutralizes the power of the enemy, making the believer superior to circumstance. Oh, that this was better known among professing Christians. In our time, there is a marked dependence upon the men of this world and their wisdom, which is “from beneath.”

TERTULLUS IS CALLED FORTH TO PRESENT THE CASE

“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.”

There is a certain order in this court that was totally absent when the Jews first dragged Paul out of the Temple. No formal charges were registered against him at that time, but they had begun to beat him.

From its very beginning, the Law given to the Jews required that grievances be presented before a judge (Ex 18:22; Deut 1:16) – a cause was to be presented. This judgment was not to be wrested, and no respect of persons was allowed (Deut 16:19). A “sentence of judgment” was to be rendered

by the judge, and only then was due punishment to be administered. It is ironic that the only way this procedure could be followed by the accusers of Paul was for it to be managed by a heathen government.

HE WAS CALLED FORTH

“And when he was called forth . . .”

Other versions read, *“when he was called upon,”* ^{NKJV} *“after Paul had been summoned,”* ^{NASB} *“when Paul was called in,”* ^{NIV} *“when he had been sent for,”* ^{BBE} *“Saul was called, and,”* ^{CJB} and *“when Paul was called in.”* ^{NIB}

It might appear as though Tertullus was summoned before the governor. That, however, is not the case. **It is Paul that is brought forth to hear the charges against him.** He is the *“him”* that Tertullus begins to accuse. Thus his incarceration of five days was brought to a momentary conclusion.

TERTULLUS BEGAN TO ACCUSE HIM

“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.”

This is certainly an oratorical beginning, with the accent being placed on flattery. Thus, the Jews thought to gain some advantage with the governor, as though they had been living in thankfulness for his expert manner of government.

By Thee We Enjoy Great Quietness

Other versions read, *“great peace,”* *“much peace,”* ^{NASB} and *“a long period of peace.”* ^{NIV}

Tertullus, although not a Jew himself, speaks for the area of Judea, and Jerusalem in particular. He flatters Felix by declaring a long era of peace had attended his reign. This does agree with the history of that time.

However, the Jews had been cultured to associate peace and well being

with Divine care. Solomon once said, *“The horse is prepared against the day of battle, but safety is of the Lord”* (Prov 21:31). David wrote, *“It is He that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David His servant from the hurtful sword”* (Psa 144:10). And again he wrote, *“I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety”* (Psa 4:8). **However, Tertullus gives the total credit for well being to Felix, ignoring God altogether.** What is even more, he does this with the sanction of Ananias and the elders.

INFORMATION ON FELIX THE GOVERNOR

Though it was said for flattery, and though Felix was in many respects an unprincipled man, yet it was true that his administration had been the means of producing much peace and order in Judea, and that he had done many things that tended to promote the welfare of the nation. In particular, he had arrested a band of robbers, with Eleazar at their head, whom he had sent to Rome to be punished (Josephus, Antiq., book 20, chapter 8); he had arrested the Egyptian false prophet who had led out 4,000 men into the wilderness, and who threatened the peace of Judea; and he had repressed a sedition which arose between the inhabitants of Caesarea and of Syria (Josephus, Jewish Wars, book 2, chapter 13, section 2). ALBERT BARNES COMMENTARY

Very Worthy Deeds are Done

Other versions read, *“prosperity is being brought,”* ^{NKJV} *“by your providence reforms are being carried out for this nation,”* ^{NASB} *“your foresight has brought about reforms,”* ^{NIV} *“through your wisdom wrongs are put right,”* ^{BBE} *“excellent measures are executed for this nation by thy forethought,”* ^{DARBY} *“evils are corrected,”* ^{ERV} and *“by your foresight and provision wonderful reforms (amendments and improvements) are introduced and effected on behalf of this nation.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

It is generally understood that Tertullus here refers to the routing of robbers from the land, together with

insurrectionists. **I can understand a Roman thinking in this manner but not the Jews, who had such a rich history of Divine protection and provision.**

Too many times professed believers who have become unduly influenced by politics and the worldly-wise, give credit to men for things that should have been traced back to the mercies of the Lord. This reminds me of the conduct of Israel during the time of Hosea, and what the Lord had to say about it. *“For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness”* (Hosea 2:9).

Due note ought to be made of the Lord’s reaction to an incorrect assessment of the source of prosperity and safety.

We Accept It Always

Other versions read, *“Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude”* ^{NIV} and *“we accept and acknowledge this with deep appreciation and with all gratitude.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Speaking for the consenting Jews, Tertullus addressed Felix on the matter social peace and benefits just as though God did not even exist. As Israel offered the grain God gave her to Baal (Hos 2:9), so these accusers, with an orator giving them assistance, offered praise to Felix that was really due to God. Jerusalem, *“the city of the Lord of hosts”* (Psa 48:8) was being outwardly managed by a heathen government. Yet, they had given favor to the Jews, making a peaceful environment and benefitting them with various conveniences. It was not that the Romans had such a high regard for Israel, as would be confirmed some years later. This was God being kind to them, but like Samson, they *“wist not”* the true circumstances.

Let the people of God of our time be quick to recognize the favor of the Lord, and give Him glory for it.

HEAR US OF THY CLEMENCY

“⁴ Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.”

As Tertullus commences his presentation, one senses that he is in earnest

quest of the favor of men, as opposed to the establishment of the truth. The *“love of the truth”* frees a person from such vain ambitions and quests. The attempt to manipulate people by flattery is not proper, and is to be avoided at all cost.

THAT I BE NOT FURTHER TEDIOUS

“Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee . . .” Other versions read, *“weary you any further,”* ^{NASB} *“detain you no further,”* ^{NRSV} *“make you tired,”* ^{BBE} *“take up too much of your time,”* ^{CJB} *“keep you too long,”* ^{GWN} *“delay you any further,”* ^{NET} *“don’t want to bore you,”* ^{NLT} *“be patient with us,”* ^{CEV} and *“tire you out with a long speech.”* ^{MESSAGE}

There is a message between the lines, so to speak, of this text. It is this: **dealing with peripheral and incidental matters is an imposition upon men of thought and responsibility.** Who is able to estimate the amount of time that is wasted concerning matters that are nothing more than weightless motes on the ocean of life. When our attention is drawn to lesser things, our thoughts tend to deteriorate, and truth moves further from us. If it is true that we are to love the Lord with all of our mind (Matt 22:37), then we are certainly stewards of our minds, and must use them profitably.

Even Tertullus seems to perceive that there is a certain tediousness involved in majoring on minors. I realize that he was speaking in a flattering manner, yet his words reveal something of an awareness that this occasion could very well irritate the governor.

And what can be said concerning matters pertaining to prayer and supplication? **How conscious we ought to be of Divine inclinations and proper priorities when we pray.** In other words no person should approach the Lord without a due awareness of who He is and what pleases Him. There may be varying degrees of these perceptions, but it seems to me that some grasp of them is to be preferred.

HEAR US OF THY CLEMENCY

“ . . . I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.” Other versions read, *“your courtesy,”* ^{NKJV} *“your kindness,”* ^{NASB} *“be kind enough to hear us briefly,”* ^{NIV} *“your customary graciousness,”* ^{NRSV} and *“your clemency and courtesy and kindness.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Again, this is flattering language,

and does not reflect a deep respect for Felix. It is an approach that is more expedient than insightful and preferred. You might call it a kind of political protocol.

Making the transition to matters pertaining to life and godliness, **God Almighty is also to be approached a certain way.** This is not a mere formality, but is associated with discernment. Here are some considerations.

⇒ Jesus taught us to pray in a certain manner. The introductory part of that manner is as follows: *“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name”* (Matt6:9).

⇒ When praying concerning the replacement of the bishopric vacated by Judas, the disciples prayed, *“And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men . . .”* (Acts 1:24).

⇒ When the early disciples prayed, they approached the Lord with a certain keen awareness of His Person. *“Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is”* (Acts 4:24).

⇒ God is IN HEAVEN, which requires an adjustment in our thinking.

⇒ The name of the Lord is to be HALLOWED, or held in the highest regard. It is to be venerated, and perceived as holy.

⇒ God KNOWS the hearts of all men, especially those who are praying to Him. This must not elude us.

⇒ The Lord created all things, particular referring to the domain that we presently occupy. Knowing that this world and everything in it BELONGS TO GOD will shape how we pray.

⇒ God must be approached with a *“TRUE HEART,”* or in absolute sincerity and the total absence of hypocrisy.

⇒ It is also imperative that our CONSCIENCE BE CLEANSED, so that the goading effects of sin and transgression are not found. If that condition does not exist, then the matter is to be addressed before going any further (1 John 1:9).

⇒ The person who approaches the throne of all grace must have had his BODY WASHED WITH PURE WATER. This

While I must admit that all of this is rather rudimentary, I say these things because there is a gospel being preached these days that absolutely fails to affirm how God is to be approached. He is being presented as a God that is anxious to hear from everyone.

⇒ Doctrinally, the approach to God is described in the following manner. *“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water”* (Heb 10:22).

These few words confirm that the following awareness ought to be present when prayers are offered to God.

⇒ God is OUR Father, indicating that prayer is to be made with an acute awareness that we are not the only ones.

is reference to baptism, also referred to as *“the washing of regeneration”* (Tit 3:5). In other words, those who present their supplications to the Lord ought to have received the atonement and availed themselves of His great salvation. If that has not been done, then that is the matter that needs to be addressed – **and the obtaining of salvation is nowhere associated with prayer.** It is rather identified with believing and obeying the Gospel of Christ.

While I must admit that all of this is rather rudimentary, I say these things

because **there is a gospel being preached these days that absolutely fails to affirm how God is to be approached.** He is being presented as a God that is anxious to hear from everyone. This, however, is not the case. While He would that all men be saved and come to a

knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4), seeking mercy and grace to help in the time of need is a privilege vouchsafed exclusively to the family, or household, of God. This is not how men are initially saved, as confirmed on the day of Pentecost, in the city of Samaria, in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, the

conversion of Saul of Tarsus, at the house of Cornelius, with Lydia and her household, the Philippian jailer, etc. In every case, the favorable response of men was the result of believing the Gospel, which was preached to them by means of a minister, *“even as the Lord gave to every man”* (1 Cor 3:5).

A PESTILENT FELLOW AND A MOVER OF SEDITION

“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 .”

The illegitimacy of the charges

what he said were disturbed. Those who received what he said experienced peace, and no longer were a liability to society. In his preaching and teaching Paul had revealed the fallaciousness of the Jews’ self-conceived traditions, and that had caused a tumult.

23:8-9). For this reason, and with the full knowledge of Tertullus and the Jews he represented, Felix would interpret this as Paul fomenting political rebellion. However, no man of God ever fomented such a rebellion.

The illegitimacy of the charges against Paul are confirmed by their ambiguity. It should be recognized that in a court of law, vagueness is out of place. In matters that require a judgment, and the pronouncement of a penalty, general charges must be supported by detailed facts, else they have no value.

A similar charge was raised against Jesus when the Jewish leaders delivered Him to Pilate. They said, *“We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King”* (Luke 23:2). However, Jesus never did forbid the paying of taxes. In fact, it was He who taught, *“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s”* (Mark 12:17).

against Paul are confirmed by their ambiguity. It should be recognized that in a court of law, vagueness is out of place. In matters that require a judgment, and the pronouncement of a penalty, general charges must be supported by detailed facts, else they have no value.

A PESTILENT FELLOW

“For we have found this man a pestilent fellow . . .” Other versions read, *“a plague,”* ^{NKJV} *“a real pest,”* ^{NASB} *“a troublemaker,”* ^{NIV} *“a cause of trouble,”* ^{BBE} *“an agitator,”* ^{CJB} *“an assassin,”* ^{MRD} *“a perfect pest,”* ^{NJB} *“a perfect pest (a real plague),”* ^{AMPLIFIED} *“dangerous nuisance,”* ^{GNB} and *“time and again disturbing the peace.”* ^{MESSAGE}

A *“pestilent fellow”* is to a culture what a disease is to a society. Such a person causes mental and moral deterioration among men. He is an infection among men, introducing liability, false notions, and moral degradation.

Of course, Paul was not guilty of being such a person. Only those who rejected

A MOVER OF SEDITION AMONG ALL JEWS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

“. . . and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world . . .” Other versions read, *“creator of dissension,”* ^{NKJV} *“stirs up dissension,”* ^{NASB} *“stirring up riots,”* ^{NIV} *“an agitator,”* ^{NRSV} *“a mover of insurrections,”* ^{ASV} *“a maker of attacks upon the government,”* ^{BBE} *“moving sedition,”* ^{DAREY} *“starts quarrels,”* ^{GWN} *“stirs up trouble,”* ^{NJB} *“a mover of debate,”* ^{PNT} *“an agitator and source of disturbance,”* ^{AMPLIFIED} and *“constantly inciting the Jews.”* ^{LIVING}

This same charge was brought against Paul and Silas at Philippi: *“These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city”* (Acts 16:20). In Thessalonica Paul and Silas were charged with turning the world *“upside down”* (Acts 17:8). **However, in every case, it was the unbelievers that caused the trouble.**

The word *“sedition”* suggests rebellion against the government – such as was fomented by Barabbas (Mk 15:7; Lk

There are environments where trouble is more apt to break out when the truth is preached.

This is owing to the presence of those who are devoted to things other than the truth. However, the people of God are not to close their mouths or modify their lives in such surroundings. Solemnly we are admonished, *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”* (Eph 5:11). Other versions read *“expose them,”* ^{NKJV} *“make their true quality clear,”* ^{BBE} *“show them up for what they are,”* ^{NJB} *“even rebuke them,”* ^{PNT} *“even convict,”* ^{YLT} and *“[let your lives be so in contrast as to] expose and reprove and convict them.”* ^{AMPLIFIED} This admonition is fulfilled by speaking the truth, and living lives that are in concert with it.

Compromisers do not speak the truth (if they even know it), in the face of such altercations. Such men are quite willing to tailor the message so it will not cause offense in those who disagree with it. This, however, is not a Divine manner, nor is such encouraged among those who declare the truth publically.

A RINGLEADER OF THE SECT OF THE NAZARENES

“. . . and a ringleader of the sect of

the Nazarenes . ” Other versions read, “a chief mover in the society of the Nazarenes,” ^{BBE} “a leader,” ^{DARBY} “author of the seditions,” ^{DOUAY} “a chief maintainer,” ^{GENEVA} and “a ringleader of the [heretical, division-producing] sect of the Nazarenes.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

By definition a “sect” is “a body of men following their own tenets,” ^{STRONG’S} and “that which is chosen, a chosen course of thought and action; hence one’s chosen opinion, tenet; according to the context, an opinion varying from the true exposition of the Christian faith.” ^{THAYER} The Greek word from which “sect” is derived is the same word translated “heresies” – αἰρέσεις [hair-e-ses]. **It speaks of a body of people who have departed from sound doctrine to embrace human tradition.** That is how the word is used in Scripture.

Here the charge is that Paul was a key man in a sectarian group that had broken away from the truth. He is depicted as promoting an aberrant form of theology – in particular, something that was wholly incompatible with the revelation given to the Jews. All of this must have sounded foolish and irrelevant to Felix the governor.

The phrase “sect of the Nazarenes”

Thus we see that if it was not for the Lord Jesus Christ, there would have been no mention of Nazareth in the Scriptures. He is the One who gave significance to that city.

is an interesting one. Since Jesus was referred to “the Nazarene” (Matt 2:23; 26:71), his followers were said to be “Nazarenes.” **All of this accents the uniqueness of Jesus.** The city of Nazareth is mentioned twenty-nine times in Scripture (Matt 2:23; 4:13; 21:11; 26:71; Mk 1:9,24; 10:47; 14:67; 16:6; Lk 1:26; 2:4,39,51; 4:16,34; 18:37; 24:19; John 1:45,46; 18:5,7; 19:19; Acts 2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 6:14; 10:38; 22:8; 26:9). “Jesus” is mentioned by name in twenty-one of those references. He is indirectly mentioned in five of them (Matt 2:23; 4:13; Lk 2:51; 4:16; John 1:46). One of these texts refers to the angel Gabriel; being sent to Nazareth to Mark, to announce she would bear the Son of God (Lk 1:26). One reference is to Joseph, when he and Mary went to Bethlehem “to be taxed,” at which time Jesus was born (Lk 2:4). Nazareth is referred to as the city of Joseph and Mary

(Lk 2:39).

Thus we see that if it was not for the Lord Jesus Christ, there would have been no mention of Nazareth in the Scriptures. He is the One who gave significance to that city.

When Jesus is actually prominent in the professed church, He will be clearly identified with it, just as surely as He was identified with Nazareth. One of the monumental difficulties of our time is that there is no apparent association of the nominal church with Jesus. **That is one of the chief evidences that suggests He is not there!** I realize this is most arresting to ponder, but the matter is worthy of thought. The condition most certainly exists, as every honest and good heart knows.

WE WOULD HAVE JUDGED HIM OURSELVES

“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.”

Now, Tertullus presents the case as though the plea for the clemency of Felix could have been avoided altogether if they had been allowed the freedom to do what they willed. He makes no mention of the whole city being in an uproar because of the allegations of the Jews against Paul, NOT because of the activities of Paul. Neither, indeed, does he mention that Paul’s life was in jeopardy before any charges had been researched and proved – something that God’s Law (Deut 1:17; 17:8-11; John 7:51) and Roman law required (Acts 22:25-26). Such a proceeding also violated the tenets of wisdom. Solomon wrote, “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and

shame unto him” (Prov 18:13).

The “carnal mind” does not permit the individual dominated by it to deal with critical issues in an orderly and just manner. In fact, it blocks out the truth itself, and the wisdom that enables people to process the truth. It blinds both heart and mind so that the real situation cannot be seen. This is particularly true in matters of religion. When it comes to speaking the truth of God, or calling for just and equitable treatment, a person cannot appeal to the minds or thinking processes of carnal people. **Such a mindset is not able to traffic in truth.**

Throughout the history of those who lived by faith, opposition to them was characterized by injustice, such as is revealed in our text. The opposition of Cain to Abel, Ishmael to Isaac, and Esau to Jacob, confirm this to be true. There was also the opposition of Egypt to Israel, Pharaoh to Moses, the unbelieving spies, and those who opposed and persecuted the prophets.

In an age that has unduly exalted education, there remains this false assumption that men will always process the truth correctly. Thus drunkards are taught what liquor will do to them, and fornicators are shown the dangers of promiscuity to both health and the mind.

HE WENT ABOUT TO PROFANE THE TEMPLE

“Who also hath gone about to profane the temple . . .” Other versions read “desecrate the Temple,” ^{NASB} “make the Temple unclean,” ^{BBE} “pollute the temple,” ^{GENEVA} “violates our tradition,” ^{GWN} “defile the Temple,” ^{LIVING} and “tried to desecrate and defile the temple.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

This was nothing more than a groundless rumor. Earlier we are told that this charge was based on the report that Trophimus, an Ephesian, was brought into the Temple by Paul. However this was nothing more than a supposition. It is written, “For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into

the temple"(Acts 21:29). Other versions read that they "assumed,"^{NIV} and "had the idea that,"^{BBE} "and thought."^{GWN}

The word "supposed" has the following lexical meaning: "to deem, think,"^{THAYER} "as regarding something as already settled or established suppose, think, presume,"^{FRIBERG} and "to regard something as presumably true, but without particular certainty - 'to suppose, to presume, to assume, to imagine, to believe, to think.'"^{LOUW-NIDA} **In the case of supposition, there is no examination or test to determine if the conclusion reached is true.** What is concluded is assumed to be true, and procedures are set in place just as though what is assumed is a settled fact.

There is a phenomenal amount of

sense of the word, these suppositions are used to develop whole bodies of theology. Procedures are developed with them in mind, and professed believers are directed to do this or that upon the imagined postulate that such things are true.

This is the kind of circumstance Jesus faced when He walked among men. He had some things to say about the traditions of men, and they are startling to the flesh.

⇒ Human traditions cause people to "transgress the commandment of God" (Matt 15:3).

⇒ Men's tradition make "the commandment of God of none effect"

versions read, "wanted to judge him according to our law,"^{NKJV} "would have given him what he justly deserves,"^{LIVING} and "and would have sentenced him by our Law."^{AMPLIFIED} Most of the modern translations (after 1885) omit this phrase (NIV (1984), NRSV (1986), RSV (1952), BBE (1949), ERV (1885), ESV (2001), GWN (1995), NAB (2002), NET (2004), NJB (1985), NLT (1996), CEV (1995), EMTV (2003), GNB (1966), IE (?), WEYMOUTH (1903), WILLIAMS (1937), MONTGOMERY (2001). Versions including the phrase include the following: KJV (1611), NKJV (1979), ASV (1901), NASB (1977), CSB (1998), DARBY (1884), DOUAY (1899), GENEVA (1599), MRD (1852), PNT (1595), RWB (1995), TNT (1526), WEB (1833), YLT (1862), LIVING (1971), AMPLIFIED (1965), LITV (1976).

I have taken time to list the versions that omit and include this phrase in order to make a practical point. After 1885, there is by no means unanimity among Bible translators on this subject. To me, this confirms the tenuous nature of the language, "oldest and best manuscripts," etc. **The authorities on this are not agreed, which means the purported evidence is not that clear.** It seems to me that under such a condition, the default should be determined by the thrust of Scripture rather than a specific set of manuscripts. This is compounded by the fact that there is no such thing as an original manuscript of any book of Scripture. Although I hold this as a personal persuasion, **I do not believe the multiplicity of translations has yielded results that justify their existence.** Although claims are made of them simplifying the Scriptures, and allowing people to understand them more perfectly, the prevailing prevalence of Scriptural ignorance exists in the churches. I do not know of a solitary person who claims professing Christians are now noted for their superior use and understanding of the Word of God. If a tree is known by its "fruit," the claims of the advantages of these many new translations stand in need of confirmation. **The claims should not be made if they are not supported by corresponding fruit.**

I will take this verse as it is represented in the conservative translations. It certainly does not violate the context, or the general teaching of scripture.

BUT THE CAPTAIN LYSIAS CAME UPON US

"... But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands..."

This verse is completely omitted by

There is a phenomenal amount of this kind of thinking in the modern Christian community. Pervasive doctrines are both taught and embraced that assume things that have by no means been confirmed. Examples of such assumptions are as follows

this kind of thinking in the modern Christian community. Pervasive doctrines are both taught and embraced that assume things that have by no means been confirmed. Examples of such assumptions are as follows.

- ⇒ That baptism has nothing whatsoever to do with salvation.
- ⇒ That the fundamental work of the church is evangelism.
- ⇒ That Jesus is returning to earth to set up a Kingdom in the realm of flesh and blood.
- ⇒ That the love of God is strictly unconditional.
- ⇒ That the church is devoted to the correction and reformation of society.
- ⇒ That there is a hierarchy of authority within the church that resembles worldly government.
- ⇒ That God wants everyone to be happy and to see their dreams fulfilled.

Although unproved in every

(Matt 15:6; Mk 7:13).

⇒ The commandment of God must be "laid aside" to keep the tradition of men (Mk 7:8).

⇒ In order to keep men's tradition, the commandment of God must be rejected (Mk 7:9).

It is difficult to imagine anything being more serious than the revealed effects of following religious tradition. And yet, it supports every denomination, and every erroneous doctrine. Sadly, the words of the Head of the church are placed aside, and some are not even aware of them.

It also ought to be noted that countless ministers of the Word have been, and continue to be, maligned because they do not hold the traditions of men. They are charged with being arrogant, false teachers, and the likes, simply because their message does not mesh with sectarian tradition.

WE TOOK HIM AND WOULD HAVE JUDGED HIM

"... whom we took, and would have judged according to our law..." Other

the following translations: NIV, NRSV, RSV, BBE, CJB, ERV, ESV, GWN, NAB, NET, NIV, NLT, WEYMOUTH, WILLIAMS, IE, CEV, GNB. **The sense of the text itself, and the context as well, does not justify this omission.** Thus, I will proceed in the persuasion that its presence is altogether proper.

This statement by Tertullus is not altogether true. Lysias did not interrupt a trial, or some kind of legal proceedings. Instead, the whole city was in a tumult. Here is what was said of the circumstances at the time Lysias arrived on the scene.

- ⇒ The Jews from Asia, seeing Paul in the Temple, had “*stirred up all the people*” (Acts 21:27a).
- ⇒ They had laid hands on Paul (Acts 21:27b).
- ⇒ The Asian Jews had informed the others that Paul had taught against the Jews, the Law, and the Temple (Acts 21:28).
- ⇒ They charged that Paul had polluted the holy place (Acts 21:28).
- ⇒ All of Jerusalem was moved, put into a state of agitation (Acts 21:30a).
- ⇒ The people came and dragged Paul out of the Temple (Acts 21:30b).
- ⇒ The Temple doors were shut (Acts 21:30c).
- ⇒ The Jews went about to kill Paul (Acts 21:31).
- ⇒ The Jews were in the process of beating Paul when the chief captain and his army came on the scene (Acts 21:32).

There was no legal proceedings taking place among the

Jews. Instead, they had incited a riot, and were proceeding with the beating of Paul, no doubt preparing to stone him. Their law did not allow for such proceedings.

HE COMMANDED HIS ACCUSERS TO COME TO THEE
“Commanding his accusers to come

⇒ He tended to cause people to rebel against authority, and to organize in hostile manner. **He was a “mover of sedition among all Jews throughout the world.”**

⇒ He was a sectarian promoter of a growing, but unpopular religious group.

Now, using oratory, Tertullus says that Felix, being an astute man, will find the charges verified when he examines Paul. Assumption, or supposition, is one of the principle characteristics of the carnal mind.

unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.”

Tertullus paints the Jews as being obedient to the political rulers over them. Therefore, as good citizens, they were appearing before the governor as they were requested to do. Lysias made reference to this in his letter, else it probably would not have been mentioned by Tertullus. *“And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell”* (Acts 23:30).

Imagining that he is presenting a compelling argument, Tertullus tells Felix that by examining Paul himself, it will become clear that the charges leveled against him were true. Once again, those charges were as follows.

⇒ He infected society in an adverse manner. Paul is said to have been found to be a **“pestilent fellow.”**

He was a “ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.”

Now, using oratory, Tertullus says that Felix, being an astute man, will find the charges verified when he examines Paul. **Assumption, or supposition, is one of the principle characteristics of the carnal mind.** This should not surprise us, for when considering the God of heaven, such a mind imagines that God is like men. Thus the Lord said to the Israelites, *“These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes”* (Psa 50:21). Therefore, when dealing with others, the flesh also tends to think others will agree with those who perpetrate lies. In fact, those who are carnal are often surprised when their lies are not believed. This attitude is frequently the catalyst for persecution against those who declare the truth of God.

It is good for us to be wise about the manners of the flesh, lest we fall into the pits and snares it lays for us.

THE JEWS AGREE

“⁹ And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.” Other versions read, *“maintaining that these things were so,”* ^{NKJV} *“joined the attack, asserting that these things were so,”* ^{NASB} *“joined in the accusation,”* ^{NIV} *“affirming that all this was so,”* ^{RSV} *“were in agreement with his*

statement,” ^{BBE} *“alleged that these were the facts,”* ^{CJB} *“joined in pressing the matter against Paul,”* ^{DARBY} *“asserted that everything Tertullus said was true,”* ^{GWN} and *“declaring that all these things were exactly so.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Here, as in other instances, those who oppose the truth are joined together. Within the council itself, Sadducees and Pharisees joined together, even though their theology radically differed (Acts 23:6). Earlier Pilate and Herod joined together as friends through their rejection of Christ and

the truth that He declared (Lk 23:12). There is a sense in which the *“truth of the Gospel”* (Gal 2:5) promotes unity wherever it is preached. **Men either unite together against the truth or for the truth.** There really is no neutral ground. There are wheat or tares (Matt 13:39), good fish or bad fish (Matt 13:47-50), the election and the rest (Rom 11:7), those who mind the things of the Spirit, and those who mind the things of the flesh (Rom 8:5), and the righteous and those who do evil (1 Pet 3:12). There are those who dead in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1) and those who are alive unto God (Rom 6:11). There are those who are of the day (1 Thess 5:5,8), and those who are of the night (1 Thess 5:5).

There is a point where both

is not only recorded in *“the volume of the book”* of Scripture, it is also recorded in the heavenly books that will be opened on the of judgment (Rev 10:12).

SOMETHING TO BE NOTED

There has been a certain culturing of our society that ought to be noted at this point. Stress is place upon the right of the individual to speak their minds – i.e. freedom of speech. **This has spilled over into the professed church as well, so that human opinions are now expressed more than the Word of God itself.** It is not uncommon to find the words of men equated with Scripture, forming the basis of acceptance or rejection. Actually, no person has a “right” to say something that is untrue or foolish. In a political environment, it may

that God would even judge the secrets of men (Rom 2:16). Jude affirmed that God would *“execute judgment”* upon men for *“all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him”* (Jude 1:15).

Tertullus and the Jews who declared what he said was so, will someday stand before the Judge of all the earth to give an account for what they have said. **The fact that they were apparently ignorant of this has no bearing whatsoever on the subject.** The Jewish Scriptures announced the coming of Divine judgment (1 Chron 16:33; Psa 96:13; 98:9). Solomon announced, *“God will bring thee into judgment”* (Eccl 11:9). And again, *“God will bring every work into judgment”* (Eccl 12:14).

The person who is dominated by the carnal mind will never think for any extended period concerning the day of judgment. Such live only for this world, with no cognitive thought about the passing of this world, the appearance of the world to come, and the day of judgment. There is no way for these failures to be avoided if one is carnally minded, and insists on remaining so (Rom 8:6).

Given these considerations, it at once becomes apparent that preaching or teaching that is tailored for *“the flesh”* and those dominated by it is nothing more than an exercise in vanity. The Gospel cannot be carried in such a container! Nothing good can come from such an approach to preaching and teaching. It is altogether a *“corrupt tree”* (Matt 7:18).

There is a point where both the righteous and the unrighteous come together, united by their nature. In our text, the unrighteous combined upon basis of lies, for there was not a single charge leveled against Paul that was true.

the righteous and the unrighteous come together, united by their nature. In our text, the unrighteous combined upon basis of lies, for there was not a single charge leveled against Paul that was true. Not only is it written that the Jews *“assented”* to, or acquiesced with, what Tertullus said, they SAID *“these things were so.”* What they said

appear as though that is the case – but it is not. Men will held in strict account for *“idle,”* or careless ^{NASB} words they have spoken (Matt 12:36). Solomon referred to man’s *“work,”* which includes what he says: *“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”* (Eccl 12:14). Paul said

PAUL IS BECKONED TO SPEAK

“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 . . .”

The details of this proceeding are not to be viewed as merely incidental. **They are the result of God working things together for the good of Paul, even in a surrounding governed by heathen, and occupied by hostile Jews.** God will have His way in any environment, even if it involves frustrating the ambitions of the Jews, and turning the hearts of the heathen

to favor Paul.

THE GOVERNOR BECKONS TO PAUL TO SPEAK

“Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered . . .” Other versions read, *“nodded for him to speak,”* ^{NASB} *“motioned,”* ^{NIV} *“given him a sign,”* ^{BBE} *“gestured,”* ^{NET} and *“signaled.”* ^{IE}

There is something to especially note in this text. Observe the quietness and orderliness that took place in the court of Felix, as compared with the tumult that broken out among the Jews who opposed

Paul.

- ⇨ The Jews from Asia *“stirred up all the people”* (Acts 21:27).
- ⇨ They cried out, *“Men of Israel, help!”* (Acts 21:28).
- ⇨ *“All the city was moved, and the people ran together,”* took hold of Paul and dragged him out of the Temple, then shutting the temple doors (Acts 21:30).
- ⇨ They *“went about to kill”* Paul (Acts 21:31a).

- ⇒ All the city of Jerusalem was *“in an uproar”* (Acts 21:31).
- ⇒ When asked by the chief captain concerning the cause of opposing Paul, there was utter confusion with some crying *“one thing, some another”* (Acts 21:34a).
- ⇒ The whole affair was so confusing that the captain *“could not know the certainty for the tumult”* (Acts 21:34b).
- ⇒ Paul had to be carried to safety because of *“the violence of the people”* (Acts 21:35).
- ⇒ When Paul was being escorted to the barracks, the Jews followed crying out, *“Away with him!”* (Acts 21:36).
- ⇒ In response to Paul’s first defense the Jews *“lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live”* (Acts 22:22).
- ⇒ The Jews *“cried out, and cast off their clothes, and the dust into the air”* (22:23).
- ⇒ During his next defense, Ananias the high priest commanded that Paul be struck on the mouth (Acts 23:2).
- ⇒ When Paul said he was called into question because of the hope of the resurrection there *“arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees”* (Acts 23:7).
- ⇒ As things intensified *“there arose a great cry”* and more striving (Acts 23:9).
- ⇒ There *“arose a great dissension”* that caused Paul’s very life to be threatened (Acts 23:10).

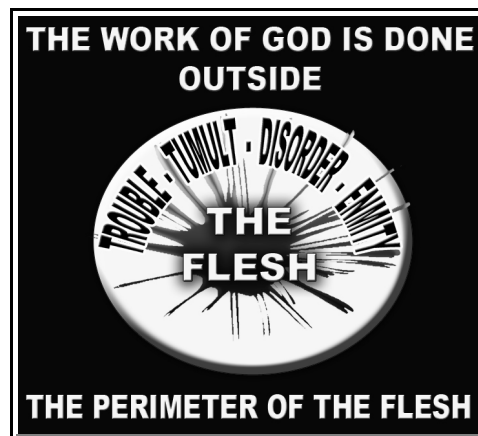
Compare this with the orderliness of this heathen courtroom.

The environment is so calm externally that Felix could summon Paul to speak with but a gesture – a nod of the head, or a wave of the hand. The religious environment was volatile and tumultuous, and the proceedings of a heathen court orderly! There is also more of an awareness of equity and the need for substantial proof that the charges brought against Paul are true. No wonder our blessed Lord said, *“the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the*

children of light” (Luke 16:8). This does not suggest that all heathen proceedings are peaceful, anymore than it does that all religious gatherings are tumultuous.

THE PREFERRED ENVIRONMENT OF THE WORK OF GOD

Even though God continues to work salvation in the midst of the earth (Psa 74:12), when it comes to the initiatives of the godly, and when they are free to make a choice concerning that work, there is a preferred environment. What is taking place in our text – a presentation by a believer in a heathen court – is not a Kingdom standard, or to be zealously sought. When Paul went to a city, operating with some degree of freedom, he did not attempt to present the Gospel in a heathen court, or even to kings and princes. **His testimony before kings, according to the commission of Jesus Himself** (Acts 9:15) **was not fulfilled by seeking out amiable kings.** All of the recorded testimonies before political dignitaries were the result of arrest and/or imprisonment (Acts 23:24; 24:10; 25:1-13; 26:19-26; Phil 4:22). One official, Sergius Paulus, called for Paul and Barnabas *“and desired to hear the word of God”* (Acts 13:7). However, there is no record in Scripture of a special Gospel initiative toward political dignitaries. This by no means suggests that it is wrong to approach such personalities with the Gospel. **It does mean it is wrong to shape ones ministry around such objectives, noble though they may appear.**



As a general rule, the work of the Lord is conducted outside the perimeter of the flesh, or the carnal mind (Rom 8:7). When this is not the preferred environment, and the individual exercises himself to avoid such a surrounding as much as possible, God can so orchestrate things that a spiritual

setback will not be experienced.

PAUL APPEALS TO HIM BEING A JUDGE UNTO THE JEWISH NATION

“ . . . Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation . . . ” Other versions read, *“a judge to this nation,”* ^{NKJV} *“a judge over this nation,”* ^{NIV} *“a judge over this nation,”* ^{NRSV} *“a judge of Jewish affairs,”* ^{NLT} *“administered justice to this nation,”* ^{WEYMOUTH} *“judged the people of our nation,”* ^{CEV} and *“knowing how fair-minded you’ve been in judging us all these years.”* ^{MESSAGE}

Notice the difference in the way Tertullus addressed Felix, and the manner of Paul. Tertullus resorts to flattery: *“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, We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness”* (Acts 24:2-3). Tertullus appeals to external advantages granted by Felix. **Paul appeals to a sense of justice and social equity:** *“Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation”* (Acts 24:10).

Historians estimate that Paul was speaking during the year of 58 A.D. Felix had been governor since 53 A.D. *“But Tacitus expressly states that Felix was joint procurator with Cumanus; and therefore he had been a judge to the Jewish nation long before the banishment of Cumanus. Tacitus’s authority is infinitely superior to that of Josephus, and this passage strongly supports the statement of Tacitus (‘Annal.’ 12:54).”* ^{PULPIT COMMENTARY}

During this significantly lengthy period, the Jews had not been oppressed, and there had been a general environment of safety and political concern. Doubtless, from Felix’s viewpoint, this had to do with maintaining order, as opposed to actually favoring the Jews.

At this point Paul will not give the account of his conversion, or the commission that was delivered to him. He did give an accounting of those things before Agrippa (Acts 26:4-23), but not before Felix. When he did speak of the faith, he did so in general terms (Acts 24:14-16,21), finally reasoning with Felix and his wife Drusilla concerning *“righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come”* (Acts 24:24-25).

Instead, Paul will address the matter of the charges brought against him.

That is what he has been summoned before Felix to do, and that is what he will do.

A Separate Identity

Notice how both Tertullus and Paul referred to the Jews as a “nation” (Acts 24:2,10). **Here was a nation within a nation – a body of people that maintained their identity, and refused to become absorbed by the Roman culture.** To this very day, the Jews have maintained their identity, wherever they are found. They are a different culture that live in a unique manner. That is the result of being chosen and cultured by the Lord Himself. **With all of their faults and foibles, they have remained separate from general society without being hostile against it.** As unique as this is, it is not the clearest example of such separation.

Once again, even though the Jews were subject to the Roman government, they remained separate from it. They trafficked in society, yet stood apart from it.

The Church Is the Ultimate Example

Actually, the church is the most unique and separated people. They are properly called, “a peculiar people,” or “His own special people,”^{NKJV} or “a people for His own possession.”^{NASB} (Tit 2:14). Again, this uniqueness is depicted in the following expressions: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Pet 2:9). Referring to this singularity Jesus said to His disciples, “ye are not of the world” (John 15:19; 17:14,16).

Those in Christ are admonished concerning being identified with an idolatrous society, which, in their case, was the majority of their social surroundings. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (2 Cor 6:17). In the very beginning of the church Peter exhorted his audience, “Save yourselves from this **untoward generation**” (Acts 2:40).

One of the great sins of the modern church is its obvious affinity with the world. Observing people frequently claim that professing Christians often look to much like the world, dress too much like it, talk like it, and conduct their lives as though this world was the main world. In our time, an approach has been taken to Christianity that actually allows for an attempted merger with the world. There is nothing right about such a view. In Christ

we are primarily citizens of heaven (Phil 3:20-21), and that circumstance is to be clearly made known in their manner of life. If appearance does not confirm such a status, it is doubtful that it exists. A failure to live in such a posture will be duly addressed on the day of judgment.

CHEERFULLY ANSWERING FOR HIMSELF

“ . . . I do the more cheerfully answer for myself. . . .” Other versions read, “I cheerfully make my defense,”^{NASB} “I gladly make my defense,”^{NIV} “I am glad to make my answer,”^{BBE} “I answer readily as to the things which concern myself,”^{DARBY} “So

audiences in hope of receiving a bribe from Paul. “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” (Acts 24:26).

In spite of this ignoble motive, God used the occasion to give Paul a greater opportunity to speak, and eventually to make strong spiritual appeals to Felix himself. This whole circumstance was under the control of heaven, for “the heavens do rule” (Dan 4:26). Thus we read the following descriptions of Deity – whether the Father or the Son.

⇨ God is “the most high God” (Gen

Felix was not a righteous man, for it is written that he expected a bribe from Paul, and therefore granted him several audiences in hope of receiving a bribe from Paul.

I’m pleased to present my case to you,^{GWN} “I shall with a more quiet mind answer for my self,”^{TNT} and “I find it easier to make my defense and do it cheerfully and with good courage.”^{AMPLIFIED}

As it is used here, the word “cheerfully” means, “well disposed . . . of good cheer, of good courage,”^{THAYER} “cheerfully, gladly, with encouragement,”^{FRIBERG} “pertaining to being encouraged,”^{LOUW-NIDA} “in good spirits”^{LIDDELL-SCOTT} and “1) well disposed, kind 2) of good cheer, of good courage.”^{STRONG’S}

Paul’s encouraging and cheerful disposition can be viewed from two perspectives, with one being superior to the other.

- ⇨ First, he knew that his cause was in perfect harmony with the faith by which he was justified. There was no pressure to compromise his spiritual stance. He possessed a pure and good conscience, and was confident that heaven fully supported him.
- ⇨ Secondly, He was encouraged by the lack of apparent bias on the part of Felix. He apparently had the reputation of being just and fair toward the Jews in particularly, and society in general.

Felix Was Not A Righteous Man

Felix was not a righteous man, for it is written that he expected a bribe from Paul, and therefore granted him several

14:18,,20).

- ⇨ God is “the Possessor of heaven and earth” (Gen 14:19,22).
- ⇨ “The God of the earth” (Gen 24:3).
- ⇨ God is “the Lord in the midst of the earth” (Ex 8:22).
- ⇨ “The earth is the Lord’s” (Ex 9:29).
- ⇨ “The Lord shall reign for ever and ever” (Ex 15:16).
- ⇨ “The Lord is greater than all gods” (Ex 18:11).
- ⇨ God says, “All the earth is Mine” (Ex 19:5).
- ⇨ God is “the God of the spirits of all flesh” (Num 27:16).
- ⇨ “He is the God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath” (Deut 4:39).
- ⇨ “The heaven and heavens is the LORD’S thy God, the earth also with all that therein is” (Deut 10:14).
- ⇨ “God is the God of gods” (Deut 10:17).
- ⇨ God declares, “See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I

<p>heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand” (Deut 32:39).</p>	<p>fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psa 24:1).</p>	<p>the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation” (Acts 17:26).</p>
<p>⇒ “The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and He hath set the world upon them” (1 Sam 2:6-8).</p>	<p>⇒ “For the LORD most high is terrible; He is a great King over all the earth” (Psa 47:2).</p>	<p>⇒ “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph 4:6).</p>
<p>⇒ God is “the God, even Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; Thou hast made heaven and earth” (2 Kgs 19:15).</p>	<p>⇒ “But God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another” (Psa 75:7).</p>	<p>⇒ “Which in His times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (1 Tim 6:15).</p>
<p>⇒ “Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and Thou art exalted as head above all” (1 Chron 29:11).</p>	<p>⇒ “That men may know that Thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth” (Psa 83:18).</p>	<p>⇒ “Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power.” (Heb 1:3).</p>
<p>⇒ “For the kingdom is the LORD’S: and He is the governor among the nations” (Psa 22:28).</p>	<p>⇒ “But the LORD is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting king: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation” (Jer 10:10).</p>	<p>When a person is knowingly reconciled to that God, having free access to Him by faith, it alters the way circumstances are viewed. This understanding is an integral part of knowing God, which is inherent in the New Covenant (Heb 8:11), and is the appointed means of appropriating everything having to do with life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3).</p>
<p>⇒ “The earth is the LORD’S, and the</p>	<p>⇒ “Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His: and He changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding” (Dan 2:20-21).</p>	<p>Paul’s calmness is evidence he had grasped the truth concerning both the nature and will of God.</p>
<p>⇒ “And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined</p>	<p>⇒ “And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined</p>	

IT HAS ONLY BEEN TWELVE DAYS SINCE PAUL WENT TO JERUSALEM

“¹¹ Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.”

The record of Paul’s activities since arriving at Jerusalem are recorded in Acts 21:15-23:33. This is probably a summation of the activity, but it provides enough of the details to confirm the remarkable level of activity that took place in less that two weeks.

The record of Paul’s activities since arriving at Jerusalem are recorded in Acts 21:15-23:33. This is probably a summation of the activity, but it provides enough of the details to confirm the remarkable level of activity that took place in less that two weeks.

- ⇒ Lodged with Mnason of Cyprus (21:16).
- ⇒ The brethren in Jerusalem received them gladly (21:17).
- ⇒ The next day went in to James and the elders (21:18).
- ⇒ Declared all the things God had wrought among the Gentiles through his ministry (21:19a).
- ⇒ James informed Paul of the “many

- thousands” of Jews there who did “believe,” yet were “zealous for the Law” (21:19b).
- ⇒ The brethren rejoiced at the news (21:20).
- ⇒ Reported to Paul that these Jews had been told that Paul was teaching the Jews to forsake Moses, not to circumcise their children, and not to walk after the customs of the people” (21:21).
- ⇒ Paul is informed the Jews will come together as soon as they know he is in Jerusalem (21:22).
- ⇒ Paul is told of four men there who had a vow upon them. He is then advised to “pay their expenses,” ^{NIV} so they can have their heads shaved, signifying the fulfillment of their vow (21:23-24a).

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|---|--|--|
| <p>⇒ Then, they advised Paul, the Jews would know what they had heard about Paul was not the truth (21:24b).</p> | <p>⇒ Paul is then given license to speak to the Jews, and he presents his first defense (21:40-22:21).</p> | <p>⇒ At this word dissension spread throughout the ranks, for the Sadducees said there was no resurrection, and that there was no such thing as a spirit or an angel. (23:7-8).</p> |
| <p>⇒ Paul is then informed that the Jerusalem brethren had already written to the Gentile brethren informing them they were under no obligation circumcise their children, <i>“save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication”</i> (21:25).</p> | <p>⇒ As soon as Paul reported that he was going to be sent to the Gentiles, another tumult arose among the Jews (22:22-23).</p> | <p>⇒ At this outbreak, certain of the scribes, who were Pharisees, spoke in defense of Paul, saying that if an angel or a spirit had spoken to Paul, their opposition would be nothing more than fighting against God (23:9).</p> |
| <p>⇒ Paul then takes the men, and the next day purified himself with them, signifying the accomplishment of the days of purification (21:26).</p> | <p>⇒ The chief captain then commands Paul to be removed to the barracks where he was to be examined by scourging (22:24).</p> | <p>⇒ The dissension grew so fierce that the captain had to remove Paul once again, lest he be torn in piece by the hostile crowd (23:10).</p> |
| <p>⇒ When <i>“seven days were almost ended,”</i> the Jews from Asia saw Paul in the Temple, and stirred up the people (21:27a).</p> | <p>⇒ As Paul was being bound, he asked the centurion if it was lawful for a Roman citizen to be beaten before any charges had been confirmed against him (22:25).</p> | <p>⇒ The following night the Lord appeared to Paul telling him to be of good cheer – that just as surely as he had testified of Jesus in Jerusalem, so would he also do in Rome (23:11).</p> |
| <p>⇒ The Asian Jews cried out, telling the people that Paul was teaching everywhere <i>“against the people, and the law, and this place”</i> (the Temple). They also said he had brought Greeks into the Temple, thereby polluting the holy place (21:28-29).</p> | <p>⇒ Upon hearing this, the centurion told the captain to take heed what he was doing, for Paul was a Roman citizen (22:26).</p> | <p>⇒ The next day, more than forty Jews took a vow not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. They also informed the chief priests and elders of their plan, telling them to ask the captain to bring Paul down to them so they could gather some more information. At the time he appeared, they said, they would kill him (23:12-15).</p> |
| <p>⇒ The city was moved, came together, dragged Paul out of the Temple, and shut the Temple doors (21:30-31).</p> | <p>⇒ The captain spoke to Paul, confirming that he was, in fact, a Roman citizen (22:26-28).</p> | <p>⇒ Paul’s nephew overhears the plan and goes into the barracks to tell Paul (23:16).</p> |
| <p>⇒ As they <i>“went about to kill”</i> Paul, a chief Roman captain is informed of the disturbance (21:31).</p> | <p>⇒ The scourging was then called off, for the captain was afraid after he knew Paul was a Roman (22:29).</p> | <p>⇒ Paul called one of the centurions, telling him to take the young man to the captain and tell him he has something to say (23:17).</p> |
| <p>⇒ Immediately the captain interrupted the beating of Paul and took charge of the situation (21:31-32).</p> | <p>⇒ The next day, Paul was loosed from his bonds, the Jewish chief priests and all their council was called, and Paul was brought down and set before them (22:30).</p> | <p>⇒ When the young man told the captain of the plot. The captain immediately made plans to have Paul transported to Felix the governor who could make an official ruling on the whole matter. He also wrote a letter to Felix informing him of the nature of this case (23:18-30).</p> |
| <p>⇒ The captain had Paul bound with two chains, and demanded who Paul was and what he had done (21:33).</p> | <p>⇒ Paul commences to speak, affirming that he had lived <i>“in all good conscience before God”</i> until that very day (23:1).</p> | <p>⇒ With an army of 470, Paul was escorted to the city of Antipatris (23:31).</p> |
| <p>⇒ A tumult ensued, moving the captain to have Paul removed to the military barracks (21:34-35).</p> | <p>⇒ The high priest commands Paul to be struck on the mouth, Paul responds that he has done so contrary to the law, and he is asked by those standing by why he has spoken in such a manner to <i>“God’s high priest”</i> (23:2-4).</p> | <p>⇒ The next day they resumed their journey to Felix, arrived safely, and delivered the letter to Felix (23:32-34).</p> |
| <p>⇒ En route to the barracks, the Jews followed shouting, <i>“Away with him”</i> (21:36).</p> | <p>⇒ Paul responds that he was unaware Ananias was the high priest, yet does not retract what he has said (23:5).</p> | <p>⇒ Felix said he would hear the case as soon as the accusing Jews arrived in Caesarea (23:35).</p> |
| <p>⇒ As the group was headed for the barracks, Paul asked to speak to the chief captain, who then found that Paul was not an Egyptian insurrectionist of that time (21:37-39).</p> | <p>⇒ Perceiving that the council before him as comprised of Pharisees and Sadducees, and knowing they were not agreed in their theology, Paul says he was a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, and had been called into question for <i>“the hope of the resurrection”</i> (23:6).</p> | |

⇒ Now, after five days, the case has been resumed (24:1)

I have listed forty-five activities that extended over a period of twelve days. That is nearly four significant happenings per day. A life that is so filled with events, many of which were epochal in nature, requires a strong faith and a consistent hope. I do not know how a person could otherwise survive such a series of events.

It ought to be noted that when a person becomes willingly involved in the good and accept able and perfect will of God, there is a certain acceleration that characterizes life. Labors become more abundant.

ACTIVITY	DAYS	TOTAL
Paul arrives at the home of Mnason, and is greeted by the brethren in Jerusalem	1	1
Visits with James and the elders	?	
Nears time of completion of vow with four men	2	3
Paul initially in the barracks	1	4
Paul speaks to Jews, and that night the Lord appears to Paul	1	5
Trip to Felix	2	7
Felix waits for Jew	5	12

All of this, from Paul's arrival in Jerusalem until the trial commences, covered a period of twelve days. The above table is only an estimation, but it gives some idea of the activities during the twelve-day period Paul mentions. This twelve-day slice of Paul's life confirms that he did, indeed, "labor more abundantly than they all" (1 Cor 15:10).

In this record, Paul's labors included giving a valid reason for the hope that was in him, keeping the faith under duress, and giving a proper example of how those in Christ react to opposition and persecution. In all of this his faith was strong and his discernment keen. Patience and hope characterize him throughout it all.

I WAS NOT DISPUTING OR RAISING UP THE PEOPLE

"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 . . ."

While Tertullus spoke for the Jews, Paul will speak for himself. Knowing that his words are subject to examination, he reports the unvarnished truth. He will give an account that is in perfect harmony with the nature of spiritual life, and the great salvation that is in Christ Jesus. He will not have to confess to conduct that was unbecoming of a person who has been made a "partaker of Christ" (Heb 3:14). He will not suffer "as an evil doer," but as one who lives righteously (1 Pet 4:15-16).

It is true that Paul will be charged with being an "evil doer," and will have a measure of sufferings because of that false charge. As he wrote to Timothy, "Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound" (2 Tim 2:9). Yet, the charge was false, and in the books of heaven, this suffering was "for righteousness' sake" (Matt 5:10; 1 Pet 3:14).

Because there is so much iniquity in the professed church of our day, a major strain of teaching pertains to the acknowledgment and confession of sin. The subject is addressed as though it was virtuous to confess sin. However, this is a wholly inappropriate representation. No person is better because he has confessed his sin. **That is something**

that must be done, but it only puts the person back at the starting line. Technically speaking, there is a difference in doing righteousness and confessing sin. Doing righteousness has to do with obtaining more, so to speak, "of the Divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4). **The confession of sin, while mandatory, is not technically an expression of the Divine nature, for Jesus never sinned, and thus made no confession of it.** However, He did suffer for righteousness' sake, leaving us an example, that we should "follow in His steps" (1 Pet 2:21).

I realize that this may appear to be nothing more than a technicality. However, I see this as something that must be said to this generation. The failure of professing Christians to be more involved with the life of Christ is owing more to sin than anything else. **When a professing Christian lives in such a manner that constant confession of sin is required, a fundamental flaw exists.** Those in Christ are required to cleanse themselves "from all

filthiness of flesh and spirit" (2 Cor 7:1). They are to take seriously the admonition to "sin not" (1 Cor 15:34; Eph 4:26; 1 John 2:1), and not philosophize about that requirement. Admittedly, when the people of God take that injunction seriously and earnestly and consistently set out to "lay aside every weight and sin that doth so easily beset us" (Heb 12:1), it will put a lot of religious professionals out of business. **However, any profession or business that depends on failure and flaw in professing Christians ought to be put out of business!** It certainly should not be afforded any dignity.

NOT DISPUTING WITH ANY MAN
"And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man . . ." Other versions read, Other versions read, "carrying on a discussion,"^{NASB} "arguing with anyone,"^{NIV} "in argument with any man,"^{BBE} "discussing to any one,"^{DARBY} "talking with any person,"^{MRD} "reasoning with any one,"^{YLT} and "debating with anybody."^{WILLIAMS}

The confession of sin, while mandatory, is not technically an expression of the Divine nature, for Jesus never sinned, and thus made no confession of it.

In my judgment, some of the versions misrepresent what Paul was saying, by translating the word “discussion,” or “discoursing,” or “reasoning.” While it is no doubt true that Paul was not reasoning in the Temple at the time of his arrest, such a procedure was frequently found in the synagogues or other precincts of the city of Jerusalem. The impression must not be left that this kind of speaking was out of order.

The word translated “disputing,” is the most common translation (KJV, NKJV, NRSV, RSV, ASV, CSB, DOUAY, ERV, ESV, GENEVA, PNT, RWB, TNT, WEB, WYCLIFFE). As the word is used here, the meaning of the Greek word from which it is translated (διαλεγόμενον) is: “to converse, discourse with one, argue, discuss: absolutely . . . drawing arguments from the Scriptures, with the idea of disputing prominent” THAYER “disputations contend, argue, dispute,” FRIBERG “debate,” UBS and “to argue about differences of opinion - 'to argue, to dispute, argument.” LOUW-NIDA

At the time of our text, Paul had gone into the Temple to purify himself, joining with four Jewish men in a vow (Acts 21:24,26; 24:18). Prior to that, he also was in the Temple praying (Acts 22:17). When, therefore, the Jews found him, he was not testifying, preaching, or reasoning with the people. There is no record of Paul himself ever going into the Temple for this purpose. The charge, therefore, was false. Even when the Jews at first incited the people against Paul, they brought up what he has been teaching outside of the Temple, in other regions (Acts 21:28).

NOT RAISING UP THE PEOPLE

“ . . . neither raising up the people . . . ” Other versions read, “inciting the crowd,” NKJV “causing a riot,” NASB “stirring up a crowd,” NIV “working up the feelings of the people,” BBE “collecting a crowd,” CJB, “causing a disturbance among the crowd,” CSB “making any tumultuous gathering,” DARBY “causing any concourse” DOUAY “making uproar among the people,” GENEVA “instigating a riot among the people,” NAB “making a dissension of the multitude,” YLT and “or bring together a seditious crowd.” AMPLIFIED

A tumult had been raised in the Temple courts, **but it had been caused by the Jews from Asia, not Paul** (Acts 21:27-21). This fact was attested to in the letter sent by Lysias the captain to Felix. In that letter he said, “This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman” (Acts 23:27). He had not rescued the people from Paul, but Paul from the people. Now, Paul’s testimony perfectly coincides with the letter sent by Lysias to the governor. There is no evidence that Paul knew what was in that letter. It was the Spirit who directed Paul what to say, fulfilling Matthew 10:19. He was not motivated by a thorough knowledge of the circumstances.

SUCH ACTIVITY WAS NOT FOUND IN THE SYNAGOGUE OR IN THE CITY

“ . . . neither in the synagogues, nor

in the city . . . ” Other versions read, “nor in the synagogues, nor in the city itself,” NASB “the synagogues or anywhere else in the city,” NIV “synagogues or throughout the city,” NRSV “the synagogues throughout the city,” GWN and “any synagogue or on the streets.” NLT

There were times when Paul disputed in the synagogues. He did so in Damascus (Acts 9:20), in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:14-41), Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-5), Athens (Acts 17:17), Corinth (Acts 18:4-6), and Ephesus (Acts 18:19; 19:8), **There is no record of Paul teaching, reasoning, or disputing, in one of the synagogues of Jerusalem.** When he first went to Jerusalem, he was with the apostles, “coming in and going out at Jerusalem” (Acts 9:27-28). It is written that during that time Paul “spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him” (Acts 9:29). It might be assumed that this was done in the synagogue, but the record does not say so. Of course, this was a considerable time before Paul’s travels throughout the world, which was the point of reference of the accusing Jews: “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” (Acts 24:5). Paul now affirms that the charge that he had caused trouble in Jerusalem was not true. It was the Jews that caused the trouble, not Paul.

THEIR CASE CANNOT BE PROVED

“¹³ Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.” Other versions read, “Other versions read, “And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me,” NIV “they are not able to give facts in support of the things which they say against me now,” BBE “Nor can they give any proof of the things of which they are accusing,” CJB and “Neither can they present argument or evidence to prove to you what they now bring against

me.” AMPLIFIED

Thus, in a display of wisdom, Paul transfers the responsibility to his accusers, for they are the ones who must present the burden of the evidence. In fact, that is why they have been summoned to come before Felix. Tertullus has presented the case for the Jews, but has furnished no evidence or corroborating witnesses. He presented the

- following charges.
- ⇒ **INFECTING SOCIETY.** We have found this man a pestilent fellow.
 - ⇒ **CAUSING INSURRECTION.** We have found this man a mover of sedition among the Jews.
 - ⇒ **LEADING A DAMAGING SECT.** We have found this man a ringleader of the sect of he Nazarenes.
 - ⇒ **DESECRATING THE TEMPLE.** Paul went about to profane the temple.

Thus, in a display of wisdom, Paul transfers the responsibility to his accusers, for they are the ones who must present the burden of the evidence.

The only charge that could possibly have any relevance in the context of Roman government was that of fomenting some kind

of insurrection. The other matters were strictly issues to unbelieving Jews. This would further buttress the testimony of Lysias who had assessed the whole matter of opposing Paul as “*questions of their law,*” not of Roman law (Acts 23:29).

Although Tertullus was a legal orator, and able to speak in an outwardly convincing manner, he actually had presented a poor case. Now Paul draws attention to that fact.

The kind of circumstance that deals with false charges is referred to in the following words.

⇒ *“False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not”* (Psa 35:11).

⇒ *“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you **falsely**, for*

The word of the Lord is clear about our responsibility to avoid suffering because of wrong doing. “But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters” (1 Pet 4:15). It is not virtuous to submit to punishment for wrong doing – even though that is something that must be done.

my sake” (Matt 5:11).

⇒ *“Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that **falsely** accuse your good conversation in Christ”* (1 Pet 3:16).

CHRISTIANS ARE RESPONSIBLE TO CONDUCT THEIR LIVES PROPERLY

The word of the Lord is clear about our responsibility to avoid suffering because of wrong doing. *“But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or*

as a busybody in other men’s matters” (1 Pet 4:15). It is not virtuous to submit to punishment for wrong doing – even though that is something that must be done. Peter reasons, *“For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God”* (1 Pet 2:20). God is not glorified because His people patiently endure punishment that is proper. Their responsibility is to zealously avoid such penalization.

CONCLUSION

The nature of life devoted to the service of Christ (which is the only valid expression of real life in Christ) is seen in this account.

⇒ Not only is God well pleased, Satan is displeased.

⇒ Not only are the people of God comforted, the children of the wicked one are agitated.

⇒ While believers become more

reasonable, unbelievers become more unreasonable.

⇒ Sound teaching enables disciples to be more aggressive in the commitment to the Lord, while it moves the wicked to be more aggressive in their expression of wickedness.

⇒ Within the context of religion, sin becomes more sinful, and wickedness becomes more wicked.

⇒ The worst of all sinners are religious sinners, for their religion tends to anesthetize them.

⇒ Opposition, regardless of its strength, cannot overthrow the faith of God’s elect.

Every person who is in Christ is, by virtue of their union with Him, in an enviable condition. When they live by faith and walk in the Spirit, they are perfectly suitable to be used by God.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 6/04/10. We will continue our current series of lessons on the book of Acts. The ninety-sixth lesson will cover verses 14 through 27 of the twenty-fourth chapter: “STANDING BEFORE FELIX.” Within five days, Ananias, the puppet high priest, came down with the elders and a certain orator to witness against Paul before the governor. With oratorical expertise, he presented their charges against Paul, adding that the whole proceeding had been vehemently interrupted, taking Paul out of their hands “with great violence.” Paul is then permitted, according to Roman law, to answer the charges leveled against him. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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