

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 26TH–27TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

THE TRIAL (ACTS 24:1–9)

"FIVE DAYS LATER..."

Paul waited in jail in Caesarea for five days until his accusers from the Sanhedrin arrived. Ananias the high priest and some elders "came down" with their lawyer.

- In the custom of the day, Tertullus praised the judge, Felix, though little of what he said was actually true.

FELIX WAS A GOVERNOR FROM 52–59(ISH) A.D.

Insurrections and anarchy were rampant, the region hardly knew peace, and Felix demonstrated little wisdom. Needless to say, he didn't deserve the title "most excellent."

- **We must be respectful, even to incompetent leaders, but we must never sacrifice integrity to gain people's favor.**

A THREAT TO THE ROMAN EMPIRE?

Tertullus's argument was that Paul was a threat to the *Pax Romana*. Similar to Jesus, they accused Paul of political sedition. Not only did they claim Paul incited riots, they also said he was a global terrorist.

- This is also the only time in the Bible when Christians are referred to as *Nazarenes*.

THE BIGGEST ISSUE WAS THE TEMPLE

In verse 6, Tertullus got to the real offense; Paul "tried to desecrate" the temple by trying to bring Trophimus, a Greek, into it.

- The lawyer concluded his opening statement with more flattery, and then some Jews Ananias had brought with him "joined in the attack."

THE FACTS (ACTS 24:10–21)

PAUL'S TURN

Paul also began with an **honest and brief compliment—out of respect, not selfish gain or insecurity**. He simply acknowledged Felix's 10-year relationship with and knowledge of Israel.

- Paul was **complimentary without being dishonest**, and he was **respectful without compromising his dignity or integrity**.

PAUL INVITED HIM TO LOOK AT THE FACTS

Paul **hadn't broken any religious or civil laws**, had **lived above reproach** (1 Timothy 5:7), and had **honored authority** (Titus 3), so there was **no evidence to validate their claims**.

- There will always be injustices, but **if we live correctly, the vast majority of the time, we will be ok** (Romans 13:3).

WHY DID PAUL EVEN GO TO JERUSALEM?

Paul's aim in Jerusalem wasn't evangelism or arguing with the Jews. He wanted to be there to celebrate Pentecost/Passover and to deliver financial aid to the church.

- Galatians 2 tells us Paul would only engage in evangelism if the church there invited him to, which they did in Acts 22.

ULTIMATELY, IT WAS A SPIRITUAL BATTLE

Paul denied that he was a lawbreaker and established this was a religious battle.

- Paul "admit[ted] this": he worshiped God **as a Christian, believed Scripture, placed his hope in God, believed in the afterlife**, and strived to have **"a clear conscience toward God and men."**

CORRUPT RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LEADERS

Paul became more of a witness of Christ than a defendant. He talked about his missionary trips, Christian benevolence, and our hope of Heaven through faith in Jesus.

- **In unfair trials (life), our only hope is King Jesus, the righteous Judge who perfectly holds all things into account.**

SYSTEMS (ACTS 24:22–27)

THE VERDICT POSTPONED

Luke tells us that Felix was familiar with Christianity and that he also needed to speak with Claudius before making a decision.

- Though Paul's house arrest seemed pretty lenient, we will find out that Felix was just another corrupt politician looking out for his own interests.

AN ODD TURN OF EVENTS?

Felix and his Jewish wife wanted Paul to tell them more about Christianity, but "Felix became afraid" and asked Paul to leave when he started to teach about **"righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come."**

- **We cannot enjoy the benefits of God without submitting to the ways of God.**

THEY DIDN'T THINK THE SACRIFICE WAS WORTH IT

Grace, blessings, and Heaven sound great, but we tend to hate the reality of biblical **submission, sacrifice, dedication, effort, and consistency**. Our problem often lies in **failing to realize short- vs. long-term rewards**.

- **What we invest in Christ now pays off in incomprehensible ways later.**

THE REAL FELIX FURTHER REVEALS HIMSELF

As Paul spoke of dedication to Jesus, Felix hoped he would get a bribe and asked him back several times thinking it would happen.

- To not upset anyone and to protect himself, Felix kept Paul in prison for two years. In that time, Luke possibly wrote his Gospel and Acts with Paul's help (God's will).

FAILED SYSTEMS

Acts is a great reminder that our **salvation and hope cannot come from any worldly systems like government or legalistic religious practice**.

- We are to show honor and respect to people, but **we must remember Jesus is the only righteous King and Judge**.

TAKE THE LEAD IN HONORING OTHERS (ROMANS 12)

- Paul isn't perfect (23:3), but he is a great example of how to live out and **show honor in a dishonorable world**.
- We must **love people, listen, not be hypocrites, be patient, help others, live in harmony and peace, bless and not curse, be humble, and not repay evil with evil**.

CLEAR AND ABOVE REPROACH

- Our beliefs and actions are our best defense against accusations we may face.
- **When our lives honor God and others, we live above reasonable suspicion**. Though there will always be corruption and lies, **the Christian life protects us from the majority of life's dangers and snares**.

WHERE WE PLACE OUR FAITH AND HOPE

- Christians should know "we are of God, and the whole world is under the sway of the evil one" (1 John 5:19).
- This isn't to pit us against people but to warn us **not to put our hope in the systems of a culture/society that perpetually fail because they are influenced by evil**.
- Though we are to live honorably in the world and its systems, **Christians are ultimately to only place their trust and hope in Jesus and His Kingdom**.
- Faith in Christ requires **effort, submission, sacrifice, dedication, and consistency**, but the long-term rewards are worth it.

"THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE" (1 JOHN 4:18)

- Paul never showed fear because he lived in God's love via a relationship with Jesus.
- **In Christ, we have no fear of man's temporary judgment or God's eternal punishment**. In Him, we find **love, security, maturity, and the power** (by His Spirit) to face and overcome the challenges of life.