

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 27TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

FLATTERY (ACTS 24:1-9) ANANIAS, ELDERS, AND TERTULLUS

After five days under guard, Paul's accusers appear to present their case against him.

- It would be highly unusual for the high priest and elders to travel 75 miles just to testify against a single man.
- They were determined to get a guilty verdict.
- Tertullus, an accomplished lawyer, would speak for these religious elite.

WELL-PLANNED FLATTERY

As Tertullus begins, it seems that he is simply filling Felix's ears with compliments.

- Felix had recently restored law and order by stopping the rebellion of an Egyptian.
- Tertullus also says that it was because of Felix's foresight that other great reforms were taking place in the nation.
- And that EVERYONE was grateful.
- Expectations were made clear through flattery.

A BRIEF HEARING

After his loaded opening, the lawyer quickly lays out the charges against Paul, and they connect to the flattery of Felix.

- Creating a parallel to the Egyptian rebel, he calls Paul a plague and an agitator who has gathered the sect of the Nazarenes to stand against the Jews and Rome.
- **Flattery always has a sinful motive. If we will listen long enough, we will find it.**

DESECRATING THE TEMPLE

Tertullus shares that the main reason Paul was taken into custody is because he desecrated the temple—A crime punishable by death, if it were true.

- Some translations include v. 7, which describes the Jewish perspective of how the commander interrupted their plan to judge Paul themselves.
- The CSB doesn't include it because it is not found in the earliest manuscripts and may have been added by a scribe as a cross reference.

EXAMINE HIM YOURSELF

In his closing statement, Tertullus invites Felix to cross-examine Paul about the whole matter.

- He is implying that someone as intelligent and powerful as Felix would definitely come to the same conclusion if he would just listen to the full story.
- In almost a synchronized manner, the other leaders joined in to chant like accusations against Paul.
- **Flattery, lies, and evil will always have allies.**

CHARACTER (ACTS 24:10-21) GLAD TO OFFER HIS DEFENSE

Felix lets Paul know it's his turn, and Paul begins his defense.

- Paul offered encouragement as he recognized that Felix was experienced in matters relating to the Jewish people.
- Tertullus offered flattery and lies to manipulate, but Paul would establish his innocence through truth and reason.

SIMPLE MATH AND PURE MOTIVES

Because it had been less than 12 days since all this started, Paul couldn't have amassed an army to stand against Rome or Jerusalem.

- He wasn't in Jerusalem to argue, and no one could testify that he had, because he was there to worship.
- He admitted that he worshiped God and believed in Jesus as the Messiah.

THE CHARACTER OF A BELIEVER

Paul's confession includes that he believes the Bible (the law and prophets) is true and that there is an eternity beyond this life.

- He believes there will be a judgment (resurrection of the righteous and unrighteous).
- His love for God drives him to obedience to God and service to others (a clear conscience toward God and men).

LIVING ABOVE REPROACH

To clarify his faithfulness, Paul shares that he came to Jerusalem to bring gifts and offerings to those in need.

- While there, many saw him in the temple—not stirring things up but participating in temple rituals.
- As we live for Christ, our reputation will be our defense against lies and slander.

CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Paul says that the people who have been around him, known him, and seen him live are the ones who can testify.

- The ones in the room already had their chance to bring charges in their own council and could only bring chaos and confusion.
- The only charge that could stand was that Paul believed in the resurrection, and that was not a crime.

CONTINUED (ACTS 24:22-27) INFORMED AND AFRAID

Felix had heard much about Christians and recognized the challenges of the conflicts in Jerusalem.

- He wanted no part in their mess, so he placed Paul under house arrest with the condition that he would pass judgment after he met with Lysias.
- During that time, he and his wife met with Paul and discussed faith and the life of a Christian. But Felix was hoping for a bribe.
- **Just knowing about God can be scary. Knowing Christ as our Savior is comforting. Are we afraid or comforted?**

TWO YEARS OF TESTIMONY

For two years, Paul remained on house arrest.

- Paul often visited Felix and his wife, and we can assume that he shared the gospel with whoever crossed his path.
- The years weren't wasted, but they don't end in Paul's freedom. Felix ultimately chose favor with men over faithfulness to God.
- Paul was left in prison.

GUILTY OR NOT

- Everyone gets accused of something.
- **Sometimes, WE are the accusers.**
- **The real question is: are we/they guilty as charged? It matters! If we are guilty, we should confess, repent, and recover. If they are guilty, we pursue accountability and restoration.**

CHASING WINDMILLS

- But what if we are not guilty as charged?
- **Do we pursue every accusation?**
- **There is a point where accusations and rumors can become a distraction to our mission, not because they exist but because they become our mission. Like Don Quixote, we see them as monsters who need to be defeated. Where are our priorities?**

A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

- We know the truth about ourselves.
- **God knows the truth about us too.**
- **Paul gave an account of his actions and motives when asked, and so should we. The rest of the time, his actions and reputation defended his true motives. If we want to live with clear consciences, we will obey God and serve as He sends us. Will we be distracted by flattery, lies, and evil? How will we use this week to remain faithful to living for Christ? Will we try to correct everyone's image of us or rest in God's view of us? Peace is more powerful than pride. We choose.**