

Drusilla, who was Jewish. Sending for Paul, they listened as he told them about faith in Christ Jesus.²⁵ As he reasoned with them about righteousness and self-control and the coming day of judgment, Felix became frightened. "Go away for now," he replied. "When it is more convenient, I'll call for you again."²⁶ He also hoped that Paul would bribe him, so he sent for him quite often and talked with him.

²⁷ After two years went by in this way, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And because Felix wanted to gain favor with the Jewish people, he left Paul in prison.

8. Discussion: (a) How did Paul use his trial as an opportunity to share his faith with Governor Felix and his wife Drusilla? (b) How are righteousness, self-control and the Judgment Day related to an effective Christian testimony? (c) Why do you think Paul's witness frightened Felix? (d) Tell how you felt when you first heard the truth about God's call to live a life of faith in Jesus and that you would someday be called to face God at the judgment. (e) Does it seem this was the last chance for Felix to respond to the Good News of salvation through faith in Jesus? (f) Why is it always foolish to miss an opportunity to draw near to God? (g) Is there ever any guarantee that it is safe to wait for a "more convenient" time to make a decision to trust Jesus and follow him? Why? Or, why not?

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An Interactive Life Application Bible Study of the Acts of the Apostles for Small Groups

Key: Blue = New Testament Red = Words of Jesus

Green = Old Testament Quotes

Lesson 30

1. Background: In lesson 29, a group of 40 men had vowed to kill Paul before they would eat or drink anything, But Paul's nephew discovered their plot and reported it to the Roman commander. That led to the following order:

Acts 23:23 The commander called two of his officers and ordered, "Get 200 soldiers ready to leave for Caesarea at nine o'clock tonight. Also take 200 spearmen and 70 mounted troops."²⁴ Provide horses for Paul to ride, and get him safely to Governor Felix."

2. The commander sends Paul to the governor.

Acts 23:25-35 Then [the commander] wrote this letter to the governor:²⁶ "From Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency, Governor Felix: Greetings ²⁷ "This man was seized by some Jews, and they were about to kill him when I arrived with the troops. When I learned that he was a Roman citizen, I removed him to safety. ²⁸ Then I took him to their high council to try to learn the basis of the accusations against him. ²⁹ I soon discovered the charge was something regarding their religious law—certainly nothing worthy of imprisonment or death. ³⁰ But when I was informed of a plot to kill him, I immediately sent him on to you. I have told his accusers to bring their charges before you."

³¹ So that night, as ordered, the soldiers took Paul as far as Antipatris. ³² They returned to the fortress the next morning, while the mounted troops took him on to Caesarea. [a port on the NW coast of Israel] ³³ When they arrived in Caesarea, they presented Paul and the letter to Governor Felix. ³⁴ He read it and then asked Paul what province he was from. "Cilicia," Paul answered.

³⁵ "I will hear your case myself when your accusers arrive," the governor told him. Then the governor ordered him kept in the prison at Herod's headquarters.

3. Discussion: (a) What evidence do you see that God had his hand upon the circumstances surrounding Paul's life? (b) Do you believe God is taking a similar personal interest in your life? Why? Or why not?

4. Paul Appears before Governor Felix

Acts 24:1-9 Five days later Ananias, the high priest, arrived with some of the Jewish elders and the lawyer Tertullus, to present their case against Paul to the governor. ² When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented the charges against Paul in the following address to the governor:

"Your Excellency, you have provided a long period of peace for us Jews and with foresight have enacted reforms for us. ³ For all of this we are very grateful to you. ⁴ But I don't want to bore you, so please give me your attention for only a moment. ⁵ We have found this man to be a troublemaker who is constantly stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the cult known as the Nazarenes. ⁶ Furthermore, he was trying to desecrate the Temple when we arrested him. ⁸ You can find out the truth of our accusations by examining him yourself." ⁹ Then the other Jews chimed in, declaring that everything Tertullus said was true.

5. Discussion: (a) Why do you think Tertullus began his case with compliments and gratitude? (b) What was true and what was false about the case presented by Tertullus?

6. Paul presents his defense

Acts 24:10-23 The governor then motioned for Paul to speak. Paul said, "I know, sir, that you have been a judge of Jewish affairs for many years, so I gladly present my

defense before you. ¹¹ You can quickly discover that I arrived in Jerusalem no more than twelve days ago to worship at the Temple. ¹² My accusers never found me arguing with anyone in the Temple, nor stirring up a riot in any synagogue or on the streets of the city. ¹³ These men cannot prove the things they accuse me of doing.

¹⁴ "But I admit that I follow the Way, which they call a cult. I worship the God of our ancestors, and I firmly believe the Jewish law and everything written in the prophets. ¹⁵ I have the same hope in God that these men have, that he will raise both the righteous and the unrighteous. ¹⁶ Because of this, I always try to maintain a clear conscience before God and all people.

¹⁷ "After several years away, I returned to Jerusalem with money to aid my people and to offer sacrifices to God. ¹⁸ My accusers saw me in the Temple as I was completing a purification ceremony. There was no crowd around me and no rioting. ¹⁹ But some Jews from the province of Asia were there—and they ought to be here to bring charges if they have anything against me! ²⁰ Ask these men here what crime the Jewish high council found me guilty of, ²¹ except for the one time I shouted out, 'I am on trial before you today because I believe in the resurrection of the dead!'"

²² At that point Felix, who was quite familiar with the Way, adjourned the hearing and said, "Wait until Lysias, the garrison commander, arrives. Then I will decide the case."

²³ He ordered an officer to keep Paul in custody but to give him some freedom and allow his friends to visit him and take care of his needs.

7. Discussion: (a) How did Paul express a positive attitude toward Governor Felix? (b) Which accusations did Paul deny? (c) How did Paul describe his personal faith? (d) What facts did Paul present in his defense? (e) How was Paul's faith in the resurrection connected with his trial?

Acts 24:24-27 A few days later Felix came back with his wife,