

## Parson to Person

### ACTS 24

*“Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator named Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul. And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: ‘Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, we accept it always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us. For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law. But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took him out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him.’ And the Jews also assented, maintaining that these things were so.*

*Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered: ‘Inasmuch as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself, because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city. Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me. But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.*

*Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation, in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor with tumult. They ought to have been here before you to object if they had anything against me. Or else let those who are here themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council, unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, “Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.”’*

*But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of the Way, he adjourned the proceedings and said, ‘When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case.’ So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let him have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him. And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, ‘Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.’ Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him. But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound” (Acts 24 NKJV).*

As we continue looking over Paul’s arrest and defense, we notice several things about the accusation given by the newly appointed lawyer for the prosecution.

(1) Tertullus suggested that Paul was a troublemaker, stirring up riots everywhere. This was simply not true. However, riots did ensue in many cities where Paul went to preach. But for the most part those riots were started by the Jews, not by Paul, and then, none in Jerusalem.

That being said, we have to notice that Roman leaders were sent to Israel to police and keep the peace. Riots were of concern to them, and therefore Tertullus used this manipulation of the facts in order to gain a foothold with Felix the Governor.

(2) Tertullus suggested that Paul was a leader of a Nazarene sect. This too was clever. Tertullus was attempting to make Christianity cultic or bazaar. He suggested that the message Paul proclaimed was a new religion.

Judaism was permitted by Rome, but bringing in a new religion would have been of concern. However, Christianity is the Jewish faith in its truest current form. There is no distinction. (This fact should not be understood as an endorsement for the Old Covenant form of Judaism—it is not.)

(3) Tertullus suggested that Paul had desecrated the temple. This too was untrue. The earlier accusation was that Paul had taken a Gentile (Trophimus) into the Temple. However, Paul had not done so. Moreover, Paul was in the Temple to observe a vow and was in full compliance with the Temple functions and regulations. Had he taken Trophimus into the Temple, the Jews would have had Roman permission to have him executed. Therefore, Tertullus changed the accusation to desecration rather than what was earlier suggested.

By this time, it would have been well known that Trophimus was not with Paul in the Temple, and if he had been, Felix might have asked to see and interview him—were he still alive.

Following the opening remarks, Paul was given opportunity to speak on his own behalf. Therefore, without the “complementarian back-massage” given by Tertullus, Paul got right to it. He knew that Felix would have known more than not, and gave him credit for that.

The outcome was still not what Paul had hoped for—neither was it for the Jews.

As we continue our study, we will see where all this leads.

I love you all, Pastor Paul