

## The Acts of the Apostles

The Journey – 2020  
Jim Hoffman

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48 AD	The Council at Jerusalem	Acts 15
49 AD	Paul's Second Missionary Journey	Acts 15:36
49 AD	Paul in Philippi	Acts 16
49 AD	Paul in Thessalonica, Berea, Athens	Acts 17
51 AD	Paul in Corinth	Acts 18
54 AD	Paul in Ephesus	Acts 19
57 AD	Paul in Macedonia and Greece	Acts 20
59 AD	Paul Returns to Jerusalem	Acts 21 - 23
60 AD	Paul imprisoned in Caesarea	Acts 24
62 AD	Paul Before Festus	Acts 25
62 AD	Paul Before Agrippa	Acts 26
62 AD	Paul Sails for Rome	Acts 27
62 AD	The Shipwreck	Acts 27:13
62 AD	Paul Ashore at Malta	Acts 28
62 AD	Paul Preaches at Rome	Acts 28:11

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The Acts of the Apostles

• Acts 24:1 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: "You have provided a long period of peace for us Jews and with foresight have enacted reforms for us. 3 For all of this, Your Excellency, 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. NLT

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The Acts of the Apostles

- The "governor" was Felix – his name actually means "happy", but he was anything but a happy man.
- The Roman historian Tacitus described Felix as "cruel, licentious, and base."
- Felix was once a slave who was set free by the Romans and his brother, Marcus, was well-liked by Rome so he worked out a way for Felix to be named governor of that place where few wanted to rule, Judea.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- Felix's wife was a woman named Drusilla, who was the daughter of Herod Agrippa the 1<sup>st</sup> – she was described as Jewish in verse #24, but she was not a Jew by birth.
- This would also make her the great granddaughter of Herod the Great who was responsible for the slaughter of many babies in Bethlehem roughly 50 years earlier.
- It was her father who martyred the Apostle James, so her family line is, shall we say, a little less than impressive. 😊

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- Drusilla was married the 1<sup>st</sup> time at the age of 14 and was said to be quite stunning to look at.
- So when Felix, who was “cruel, licentious, and base” saw her well naturally he had to have her despite the fact that she was married.
- Drusilla was given in marriage to Azizus, king of Emeza. The historian Josephus implies that she was unhappy in that marriage and was later seduced by Felix with the help of a Cyprian sorcerer named Simon.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

**Have you heard yet of “pretty privilege”?**

**Perhaps just as distasteful is the downside of being an attractive woman – in some times and cultures being “pretty” was anything but a privilege.**

**Imagine Drusilla’s life if only she had been born homely.**

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- **“the high priest, arrived with some of the Jewish elders and the lawyer Tertullus, to present their case against Paul to the governor”**
- So on one side of the courtroom we have Tertullus as the prosecutor along with the 71 members of the Sanhedrin.
- On the other side of the room we have the Apostle Paul who will stand alone, speak for himself, and do more than hold his own.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- After sucking up to Felix, Tertullus brings the charges.
- “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.”
- Troublemaker, rioter, cult leader, and a desecrater of the temple – but can they prove any of those?

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- **Acts 24:10** 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. NLT

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- For some reason Eutychus keeps coming to mind every time someone asks Paul to speak. 😊
- Paul’s defense is a simple one – all of the charges they alledge are bogus and cannot be proven.
- He also goes on to say that with but a little bit of effort all of the charges against him would be found to be baseless.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

• Acts 24:14 "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!'"  
NLT

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- "I admit that I follow the Way, which they call a cult"
- Paul would gladly own the charge of following the Way for in that one word we sum up the answer to one of life's great questions that Job had raised years before.
- Job 9:2 "Truly I know that it is so: But how can a man be in the right before God?" – it is no trivial matter at all to make this inquiry, so Paul is arguing that what he is really on trial for is of the utmost importance.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- What Tertullus called a cult known as the Nazarenes, Paul relabels as "the Way".
- "Nazarenes" was a slur of sorts used by the Jews to label Christians as a cult.
- Paul, dismisses that label and instead replaces it with a label he evidently liked, "the Way" probably because it came right from the lips of Jesus in John 14:6.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- **“I worship the God of our ancestors, and I firmly believe the Jewish law and everything written in the prophets. I have the same hope in God that these men have, that he will raise both the righteous and the unrighteous”**
- Maybe this time in Paul’s answer he seeks to gain some “buy in” from both the Sadducees and the Pharisees.
- They all believed in the Torah and the Pharisees believed in the prophets and a resurrection.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- **“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”**
- Like our laws today, according to Roman law the accused had the right to confront his accusers.
- Tertullus was there, the Sanhedrin were there, but where are the witnesses of the “crimes” he is accused of? They are not there because there are none.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- **“Ask these men here what crime the Jewish high council found me guilty of, except for the one time I shouted out, ‘I am on trial before you today because I believe in the resurrection of the dead!’”**
- In fact, Paul says that he has already been through this before in Jerusalem and was not found guilty of anything beyond believing in a resurrection of the dead.
- So Paul tells Felix, **“ask them for yourself what happened in Jerusalem”**.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

• Acts 24:22 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. 24 A few days later Felix came back with his wife, 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. NLT

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### The Acts of the Apostles

• "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"

- Felix was "quite familiar with the Way" – I wonder how?
- Was it because as governor of Judea he has been listening to these same rumblings about a Messiah named Jesus and his resurrection?

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Or was it because sometime in his life as a slave someone witnessed to him?
- Since we are not told, we are free to speculate – maybe he had been touched by the wooing of the Holy Spirit in recent days?
- What we do not have to speculate about was the fact that he, "**was quite familiar with the Way**" because that is provided for us in the text.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- So what does Felix do? He does what every leader does when he is in over his head in one way or another – he calls a “time out”.
- He wants to wait for Claudius Lysias to arrive – yeah, that’s a great idea since he was able to make so much headway when he held the same trial. 😊
- By the way, is there any reason to expect that Claudius Lysias was coming? That is not in his letter to Felix.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- **“A few days later Felix came back with his wife, 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”**
- The fact that Felix calls for Paul to come address both himself and Drusilla may be evidence of the Holy Spirit working on him.
- Whether it’s the influence of the Holy Spirit or idle curiosity, he calls for Paul.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- What Felix and Drusilla hear from Paul is a 3-point sermon organized around, **“righteousness, and self-control, and the coming day of judgment”**.
- The historian, Tacitus, also said this about Felix, **“a master of cruelty and lust who exercised the powers of a king in the spirit of a slave.”**
- Remember Drusilla’s heritage – she was a “Herod” and probably of the same ruthless ilk as her forebearers.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- Felix and Drusilla may have been dumbfounded at what Paul gave up and what he risked for this one known as Jesus of Nazareth.
- “You don’t meet this kind of devoted person all the time so let’s probe his thoughts” – let’s listen to him.
- When Paul starts to speak it is said that he “reasoned” with them – **“being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you”**. 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:15 ESV

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

**In one brief sentence, can you state your reason for the hope within you?**

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- And what is he going to reason about – **righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come.**
- If we are going to reason with someone about righteousness, then it would seem odd not to mention that we have none of our own.
- This may or may not have struck Felix and Drusilla as something foreign – anyone who is honest with themselves would conclude the same.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- Part of the evidence that we have no righteousness of our own is found in our lives and our lack of self-control.
- And since we will all one day die, well speaking about the “judgment to come” would also fit nicely into this line of reasoning Paul is using.
- When the conversation is coming to a close, Felix’s own emotions betray him to the point that he is probably visibly shaken.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- **“Felix became frightened”** – which would have been the response of anyone unsaved, and especially Felix because of his history.
- Think about Felix – Tacitus described him as ruthless and cruel. He himself took a name that was his opposite so to speak, for he was anything but a happy man.
- Add to that - we are all convicted by our own sin on one level or another and here in Felix we have a frightened man who emotionally is exactly where he ought to be.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- But his response is not a good one – **“Go away for now,” he replied. “When it is more convenient, I’ll call for you again.”**
- What’s that old saying, “the road to hell is paved with good intentions”?
- Felix says he will resume this conversation with Paul at a more convenient time, and despite his being uncomfortable he does call for Paul again and again.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**



**“ Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts ”**

**C. S. Lewis (The Screwtape Letters)** 31

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- Sadly, this is one of the ways many who are under conviction handle the moment.
- “Not now” becomes not ever – I’ve preached enough funerals to experience the glares at the meal afterward that say, “how dare you rock my world like that!”.
- Of course I would like to say back, “that wasn’t me rocking your world, that was the Spirit of God and the Word of God”.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- Felix, however, does call for Paul again and in his purpose for calling him we have even greater insight into the mind of Felix.
- **“He also hoped that Paul would bribe him”** – what? This man who was terrified when he first heard Paul is now looking for a “bribe” from the same man?
- Felix was so stuck in his flesh that he assumed Paul was like him, a common condition described as “I see my fault in you”. 😊

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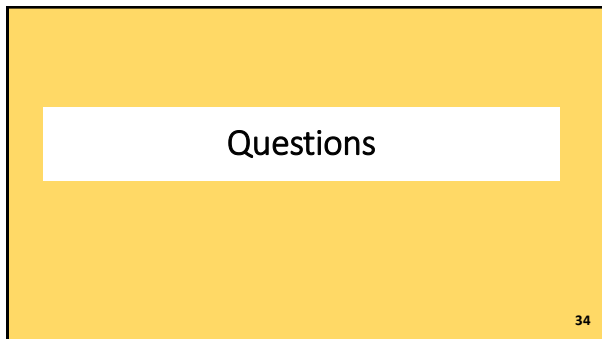
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