

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Acts 24:1-9 | Session 66 | Paul Stands Trial in Caesarea | A.D. 60

Paul is under a form of arrest in Caesarea. He is being kept in *Herod's Judgment hall* (23:35). The Greek word is *praetorium*, which was one of several of Herod the Great's palaces in Israel. Presumably, Felix, the governor lived in part of the **Judgment hall**. Archeologists have uncovered the palaces with its many rooms, a bathhouse, and a dining room facing a near Olympic sized pool. According to ancient historians, a large number of prisoners were detained there. Paul, being a prisoner of high status (a Roman citizen) probably received better accommodations and care. The **Judgment hall** was most likely more secure against assassination attempts and may be the reason Claudius Lysias sent Paul there.

Chapter 25, verse 1—

After five days Paul's accusers arrived. This would have allowed both sides to prepare a case to present before the governor, Felix. The **high priest, Ananias**, along with some of the rabbinical **elders** brought with them a **certain orator named Tertullus**. It is unknown if **Tertullus** (which is a Roman name) was a Roman, or a Jew. It does not change the narrative either way, but if he was a Roman (a Gentile), it would be ironic since the Jews were accusing Paul of collaborating with Gentiles (See Acts 21:28; 22:21-22). The fact that Ananias and the elders made the trip to accuse Paul indicates they are using all of their influence to have Paul put to death. **Ananias** may have had a personal vendetta against Paul for the rebuke Paul gave him after he ordered him to be struck on the mouth (23:3). The word **orator** is the Greek *rhetor*, or the one who would do the speaking. An **orator** was not a legal expert, but expert in words. A person skilled in rhetoric may be able to convince a judge or a crowd, but that does not mean they are truthful.

Verse 2-4— [\[I. The Introduction\]](#)

The case begins with **Tertullus** presenting a flowery introduction. The goal was to get on the good side of the judge. We might call it pandering or an attempt at flattery. Whether or not it works on Felix will be seen later. **Tertullus** praised **Felix** for **quiet stability** (i.e., peace), his **very worthy deeds** (i.e. reforms) and his **providence** (his attention to public affairs). There are some historical accounts that Felix was corrupt and that violence spiraled out of control, partly through his brutal but inefficient attempts to crush it (See Josephus Antiquities, 20:161-182; Wars, 2.252-71). Perhaps **Tertullus** said more, and likely he did, as he asks Felix for patience for being **further tedious unto thee**; Luke only records the main points for us. He asks **Felix** for his **clemency**, i.e., his gentleness or kindness in hearing him out.

Verses 5,6— [\[II. The Narrative\]](#)

Now the deceptive charges are levied against the *chosen apostle of Jesus Christ*. As with all who slander, they mix truth with error to set up a false narrative that sounds plausible to an outsider. In this case **Tertullus** attacked Paul's character by making him to be **pestilent** (destructive and dangerous; or, he's a pest! He is denouncing Paul as a dangerous "plague"). And, a **mover of sedition**, that is, Paul is accused of starting riots. While it is true there were riots in many places Paul visited, he never started them. The source of the riots was Paul's

enemies. Paul was not the **ringleader**. The term **sect of the Nazarenes** is a derogatory smear, the word for **sect** is *hereseos* in which we get our word heresy. Neither did Paul ever try to **profane**, or desecrate **the temple**. Paul always followed the Mosaic Law.

Riots Instigated by Jews, not by Paul

Acts 13:50	Paul and Barnabas are driven out of Pisidian Antioch	Jewish Instigation
Acts 14:5	Paul and Barnabas flee a mob in Iconium	Jewish Instigation
Acts 14:19	Mob in Lystra nearly kills Paul	Jewish Instigation
Acts 17:10	Paul escapes Thessalonica	Jewish Instigation
Acts 17:14	Paul is chased out of Berea	Jewish Instigation
Acts 19:23	Riot erupts in Ephesus	Jewish Instigation

Verses 7,8,9— [\[The Conclusion; Inviting the governor to investigate directly\]](#)

A portion of verses 6-8 are not included in some Bible translations:

...and would have judged according to our law.

- 7 But the chief captain Lysias came *upon us*, and with great violence took *him* away out of our hands,
- 8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee:

The Holy Spirit's version of the story;

Certain men had stirred up the people and had Paul arrested (21:27)

They dragged him out of the Temple to kill him (21:30-31)

They stopped beating him when they saw the commanders (21:32)

Lysias came to the rescue of Paul, demanding to know what the charge was (21:33-34)

Lysias commanded Paul to be scourged, but stopping when it was discovered Paul was a Roman citizen (22:24-25)

Lysias commanded the Sanhedrin to decide upon a charge, but had to rescue Paul before one could be determined (22:30-23:10)

Lysias' version of the story (23:27-30)

"I rescued him, having learned he was Roman" (27)

"I found him to be accused about their Law, but nothing deserving death or imprisonment" (29)

Tertullus' version of the story (24:5-8)

"We would have judged him according to our Law, but Lysias...with much violence took him out of our hands."

The Jews with Tertullus agree with his story. Continued next week.