

April 28, 2024
Acts 24 “When The World Treats You Unjustly”

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Character evaluation:

Ananias came on the scene about A. D. 47, he was mean, Pro-Roman, suspected by Rome of wrong doing, tried in Rome and acquitted. The locals hated him and when revolt with Rome broke out he was hunted down and killed by his countrymen. One of the most corrupt high priests in Israel’s history.

Felix was a former slave, he was a ruthless and violent sort of fellow. He had been a former slave. He some how gained his freedom and favor with the authorities to get this position. Drusilla was his 3rd wife. He stole her from her husband using a sorcerer!

The primary dividing line between Christians and Jews is the resurrection of Jesus and coming judgment. This is also the basic starting point for any dialogue that can be profitable between the two. Gleaned from *John B. Polhill* God’s purpose for Paul.

The prosecution:

Tertullus a lawyer, levied 3 charges at Paul: “sedition (violation of Roman law), sectarianism (violation of Jewish law), and sacrilege (violation of God’s law).” *MacArthur*

Tertullus called Paul a real pest, this **sedition**, Tertullus said, was Paul’s attempt to disturb the pax romana. This charge was most dangerous, if convicted, he would die.

Sectarianism, or heresy centered around Paul being pinned as the ringleader of the Nazarenes, a derisive term for followers of Jesus. The implication being that Paul was their leader and they were troublesome to Israel and Rome.

The last charge, **sacrilege**, pointed to Paul as having tried to desecrate the temple. If he had gone through with something like this the Jews could have killed him on the spot, no trial needed. In reality there was a riot, the Jews started it! No mention of that.

Paul’s defense:

Paul methodically goes through the charges, the worst one in the eyes of the court first, **sedition**. Paul’s defense was that he can be confirmed as having been in town for only 12 days, hardly long enough to set up and then instigate a following large enough to start a riot! He notes that his purpose in Jerusalem was to worship. That said, the charges against Rome were not proven true.

The second charge of **sectarianism** Paul handled by saying, yes I am a Christian. But he denied that was heretical. Paul further states, I am a member of the “Way.” Tertullus called them Nazarenes, followers of the Way, same difference. Paul submits that he and the Jews both serve the God of their fathers. Common ground. Most of his accusers who were present were of the Sanhedrin and therefore, Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection. This

identified them as the real heretics according to the Scriptures. Paul believed all of the OT, they, only the Tora. A matter of concern to Jews not Rome.

The third charge of **sacrilege**, the attempt to profane the temple, Paul refuted by stating that he had brought an offering and gifts to help the Jews in need. Why would he do this and on the other hand do anything to desecrate the temple? The real problem came in when Jews from Asia made a false charge against him. Paul says, they ought to be here to make their accusation. Where are they? The courts frowned on this.

Felix and wife/Jewess, Drusilla met with Paul and he shared the gospel with them. Paul zeroed in on righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come. Felix's fear did not lead him to repentance. Felix got over the conviction and had Paul visit him often. I guess like in **v 17**, he wanted some gifts and money for himself. Greed. Corruption.

Outcome:

Two years pass. Fetus is the new sheriff in town. Paul's life was put on hold due to: jealousy, rumors, lies, deceit, greed, & hatred for the name of Jesus. God's plan for him

INJUSTICE: **Proverbs 20:23; Leviticus 19:15; II Chronicles 19:7; Job 11:14; Isaiah 9:7.**

Application:

When the world treats you unjustly: trust God, speak truth, admit when you are wrong, walk in your integrity, do not retaliate, witness to the very people who are opposing you. Remember, God works all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose, see **Romans 8:28**. Take comfort in knowing that time surfaces all truth. When Pilate was interrogating Jesus he asked, what is truth? See **John 18:28-38**. Believe me, he knows what truth is now. So, do like Paul did before the unjust: speak truth, be humble, and trust God to do what is right. When it comes to this world's justice, think about these words in **Acts 8:32-33**, "Now the Scripture passage he was reading was this: **He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb is silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who will describe his generation? For his life is taken from the earth.**" Emphasis mine. Things do not always go the way we want or think they should, but in God's providence they always go the way He has planned so that His will is accomplished. God's will be done!