

Governor Felix: Saying “Wait” to God

Acts 24 (NKJV)

May 4, 2022

Introduction: Felix, the governor of Caesarea, had moved from slavery to freedom to high government power. He was married at least three times. His third wife, Drusilla, had married the king of Emesa at fifteen; Felix seduced her for himself a year later. The historian Tacitus described Felix as “a master of cruelty and lust who held the power of a tyrant with the disposition of a slave.” For a brief time, Felix had the opportunity to say “Yea” to God. What he said instead was “Wait.” The Apostle Paul is in trouble. He has barely escaped a riot and a plot against his life. Now Paul is imprisoned in the hands of a pagan governor.

Review Questions and Answers:

1. Note the people, places, and events of this story. What would you recapture if you were presenting this as a news event?
2. What words show the effort Tertullus made to gain the favor of Felix (vv.2-8)?
3. What charges did Tertullus bring against Paul (vv.5-6)?
4. If you had been a lawyer for Paul's defense, how would you counter this kind of prosecution?
5. How did Paul answer the charges against him (vv.10-21)? What did he admit, and what did he deny?
6. How did Paul believe in the resurrection influence his life (vv.15-16, 21)?
7. If you believed that a person who dies simply ceases to exist in both body and soul, how would you conduct your life differently?
8. What does the way Felix handle Paul's legal case tell you about his attitude toward Christianity (vv. 22-27)?
9. Verse 25 says that Felix was afraid. Why?
10. Paul was in the custody of Felix for two years period what opportunity did Felix have during this time?

Reflect and Pray:

- ✓ What is dangerous about saying wait to God?
- ✓ What would it mean for you to keep your “conscience clear before God?”
- ✓ What did you consider in making your own response to the Christian faith? What did you consider before giving your life to Christ and making a faith confession?
- ✓ What part does fear play in your own faith or lack of faith in Jesus?
- ✓ Slowly reread vv. 15-16, asking God to bring to your mind appropriate prayers. Then pray as the Holy Spirit lead you.
- ✓ Do you have a Felix or two in your life? God gave Felix a two-year opportunity to learn of Jesus, and he used the imprisoned Apostle Paul as his advocate. Who listens to you, even occasionally? Be ready to represent well the name of Jesus.

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.

² And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: "Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and ³ prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, ³ we accept *it* always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. ⁴ Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your ⁴ courtesy, a few words from us. ⁵ 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. ⁶ He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, ⁶ and wanted to judge him according to our law. ⁷ But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took *him* out of our hands, ⁸ commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him." ⁹ And the Jews also ⁹ assented, maintaining that these things were so.

¹⁰ 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, ¹¹ because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship. ¹² And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city. ¹³ Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection ¹⁵ of *the* dead, both of *the* just and *the* unjust. ¹⁶ This *being* so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

¹⁷ "Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation, ¹⁸ in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor with tumult. ¹⁹ They ought to have been here before you to object if they had anything against me. ²⁰ Or else let those who are *here* themselves say ²⁰ if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council, ²¹ 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.' "

²² 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." ²³ 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.

²⁴ 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. ²⁵ 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." ²⁶ Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, ²⁶ that he might release him. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him.

²⁷ But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound.