

Acts 24:1-27

January 6, 1977

Acts 24:1

“descended” - came down

orator” – advocate; like a barrister; a lawyer. I believe, to the best of my recollection, he must have been Roman. It sort of surprises me that the top Jewish leadership of the Sanhedrin, would get an unbeliever to front for them. But, you know, if you want to pull the strings on anybody then it doesn’t make any difference who you put in bed. Hire the mafia or anybody.

Acts 24:2

“when he was called forth” – i.e. Paul

“saying” - this is what he said to Felix

“great quietness” - he’s talking about the kind of quietness that you enjoy under a dictatorship, because Felix had been chopping off heads, shooting people, hanging them, murdering them, getting rid of them. And anybody that said anything against the government got shot, now. And, of course, you shoot a few extra hundred to keep the rest of them; so we don’t have anything but quietness. It is so quiet that everybody walks around with a long face, because if you smile they may execute you cause they think you’re hiding something or you’re tricky. You just watch situations in countries that are enslaved. People do not smile.

“very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by the providence” - boy, it’s typical savvy-ing-up. Total lies, but, you know, it’s nice politics.

Acts 24:3

Boy, oh boy. This Tertullus is working for an assignment in Rome, because in that day advocates; lawyers; barristers were sent into different parts of the Roman empire to develop them. It was their “interim year.” I think now you understand.

Acts 24:4

“notwithstanding” - but

“that I be not further tedious unto thee” - it’s what you and I would say, “I don’t want to take any more of your time; I only want a two minute appointment.”

“pray” – ask - he didn’t do any praying. He asked.

Acts 24:5

“a pestilence” - He’s a real pest; ought to get the exterminator. That’s # 1.

“a mover of sedition” – sedition is in the plural – “seditions” This means; a rebel and one who incites, as well as excites, seditions. And I am sure, from the in-depth spiritual perception and awareness; the first principle of the Corps, that he had cases like Thessalonica. After all, a lawyer has to go back and pick up cases, doesn’t he? I remember reading that they had a big “doo” in Thessalonica (**Acts 17.**) What about Ephesus? See, he documented it. He said “Look,

over here he had all that trouble. Over there he had all that trouble. He's a mover of seditions, plural; a rebel."

"sect" – cult; heresy. The word "sect" is the one they, today, use as cult awareness. It's from the word which is translated in English heresy. That was number 3.

- 1) He's a pest.
- 2) He's a mover. These are the accusing things of Paul. He's a rebel.
- 3) He's a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

Acts 24:6

"profane" - pollute

- 4) Who hath gone about to pollute the temple.

"whom we took" - and you go way down unto **verse 8**; "unto thee." Don't scratch the rest yet, I'm just going to tell you something.

Acts 24:6&8:

"We took ... unto thee [brought unto you] by examining [him] of whom thyself mayest take knowledge [now] of all these things [four points], whereof we accuse him [that we accuse him of]."

Acts 24:9

"assented" - agreed

The Greek text; starting with the word "and", in **verse 6**, all the way through **verse 7** and **verse 8**, until the word "unto" are not in the text. But I think you might as well leave them because they are basically accurate.

This "ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" of course is the one that's the most interesting to me. Because of the times in which we live, where today The Way Ministry, that's perhaps as accurate a ministry on the truth of Christianity as there has been for centuries, is called a cult. We are called heretics by the organized, so-called "Christian" church. When the real truth is, they are the heretics. The real truth over here is that these Jews, who were doing the accusing, were the real heretics. But they accused Paul of being the ringleader of the heretics, known as the way.

Why did he bring this to the attention of a Roman governor? There were certain religions in the Roman Empire, because of their size, that they accepted and tolerated. They gave them a license to exist.

I thought of this, when I was working this again: a number of weeks or months ago I wrote to a network and said, "Since you did that; on T.M. and the Unification Church, why don't you do the same on the United Church of Christ and Roman Catholicism?" You know what they wrote back? The head of the department wrote back and said, "They are too well ingrained and established; because anything we might say would have no influence." I thought of this today.

He brought this up; called them a cult, because they were not one of the big outfits of the Roman Empire. They were all accepted. And of course they had to put up with Judaism

because they were the largest body in the particular provinces where Felix and these men served.

About four years ago, or maybe three, I was sitting with the Superintendent of Schools at New Knoxville, who had no particular like for The Way Ministry. He's dead now. Only, the one they have now is stupider. We were talking about The Way renting the facilities, which we do, to play basketball up there at times and use their stage for a number of productions. There's a religious group, I think it's at Minster or someplace. It's under this M.D.; he finances a lot of it. He's a friend of ours. He doesn't like us, but he's a friend of ours.

Old Doc Wolf used to support The Way Ministry as long as I didn't teach healing. When I got to the Word and saw that the Word did have healing in it, then Dr. Wolf quit supporting The Way Ministry. He's always been very missionary-minded. He's a tremendous doctor. Today, if we have something at International, Dr. Wolf takes care of us at the Emergency in St. Marys. I like the guy. Just because he quit supporting The Way doesn't mean I don't like him.

They had asked to use, for something or other, the facilities of the high school and the superintendent had turned them down. And he made the statement to me, "We've got two churches in New Knoxville. They've been here a long time. That's all we want." I said, "But I thought this was America. What would you do if the Roman Catholics wanted to come in?" He said, "We'd never allow them." If I was a Roman Catholic, you know what I would do? I'd go start a church with one person in that town. He's supposed to be an educator; supposed to lead our young people in the knowledge of the Constitution of the United States of America. What a bunch of hypocrites.

I thought of that today when I was putting the final touches on this 24th chapter. The reason they called it the "sect of the Nazarenes" was because they just weren't big enough. Whenever you get big enough, they quit calling you a sect. If you've got enough influence: politically, financially, and every other way, they quit calling you a sect. Isn't it wonderful to look back on the history of Christianity to see, that at this particular time in history that we're reading about and even where some of us are living today, so many things are almost synonymous. It's really something. Of course, in that day, they were called heretics because they were not what today you would call Jewish or those three other major gods that the Romans had. Today we're called heretics because we don't fit into the pattern of what the so-called organized Christian church has decided. What a time!

Acts 24:6a & 8b

Dr. reads through this, skipping **verse 7** and the parts of **verses 6 & 8** that are not in the texts.

Acts 24:9

"assented" – agreed

"saying that these things were so" – i.e. they said "Amen. Tertullus has laid her out for you; that's what it is."

Acts 24:10

"then" - and

"beckoned" - you know, nodded his head

“answer for myself” – apologize for myself. The word “answer” is the word *apologeomai*; apologize. We’re still at it.

And here’s my great key for thirteen days:

Acts 24:11

“since” - away from

“for” - delete

I told you I don’t think you can get over fifteen. And in real truth, I believe you could go thirteen, but there is a problem in here simply about the morrows; the traveling time and a few other things.

Acts 24:10

Did you notice how Paul does not soft-soap the situation? He doesn’t tell him how great a man Felix is. He just says you’ve been there many years [verse 10]. That “many” is, of course, seven; he was there seven. The reason he used “many” is because ordinarily (He was not a governor like you and I think of governor of the state of Ohio. It just means ruler over a certain territory, like the county you are in and maybe half of another county.) these men never stayed in these assignments longer than three or four years. Paul, using the statement “many years,” is not thinking thirty or forty as you and I might think of many years, but he’s thinking and saying, “You’ve been here a lot longer than ordinarily you would have been; many years.” The reason Felix was there these years is because, as I said, he was a real notorious kind of criminal. He really put that section of the country under his thumbs. He exacted taxes that brought a fantastic amount of income and took care of some groups that he didn’t particularly like or the ruler didn’t like. That’s why Paul makes this statement.

“I do the more cheerfully answer for myself” – “I’m very happy to present my case” is what he’s saying.

Acts 24:12

“neither raising up the people” – “or causing a sedition among the people”; I didn’t run around among the people

“neither in the synagogues” – nor in the synagogues

Acts 24:13-14

“I confess unto thee” - I say unto you, Felix

“call” – or have labeled

“heresy” - which is the same word that previously was “sect” (pg. 377, verse 5), you and I know it as cult also.

Paul does not admit he was a sect, or a cult, or a heretic. But rather that The Way is the real “whole” for the fulfillment of all the law and the prophets, for the fulfillment of all Israel. That’s the testimony.

Acts 24:15

“hope...that there shall be a resurrection of the dead” - he’s right back at it. And again it’s hope-why? Not available now. Hope of what? The resurrection.

“both of the just and unjust” – meaning: both of the righteous and the unrighteous; both of the believers and the unbelievers

Here these people, who are endeavoring to make the accusations against Paul, all basically belong to, what would be referred to as, Judaism today; people of Israel. For Israel there will be a resurrection. There will never be a resurrection for you. For all unbelievers or unrighteous there will be a resurrection. For you, even if you blow it to the hilt, there will never be a resurrection. “Resurrection” is for Israel and all unbelievers. “Gathering together” is for the Body of the Church; the born-again believers. This is why it never in the Bible talks about the Church of the Body being resurrected. It talks about the dead in Christ rising, then we which are alive and remain shall be changed and then we’re joined together. [I Thessalonians 4:16-17]

The reason you cannot have a resurrection in the Body of the Church is because not everybody is going to be dead. In order to have a resurrection, you have to be dead. All so-called Israel will be dead. All unbelievers will be dead. That’s why there is a resurrection: of the Righteous; Old Testament saints, and the unrighteous; unbelievers: resurrection for the believers of the Old Testament and resurrection for the unbelievers of all time, including the time in which you and I live, the Body of the Church. Jesus Christ, being a minister to the circumcision, was resurrected and so far he is the only one.

Acts 24:16

“exercise” – practice

“I exercise myself” – i.e. I work on myself; I practice

“a conscience” – this joint knowledge

“void of offence” - void of stumbling

Isn’t that a beautiful verse?

Acts 24:17

“alms” - that abundant sharing

“my nation” - that is, those born again believers who were Jewish in background

Acts 24:18

“certain Jews from Asia” - those at Ephesus, Thessalonica, and other places

“neither with the multitude” - I wasn’t making any trouble

“tumult” – uproar; “I was just in the temple doing my own thing”

Acts 24:19

“object” - accuse

There was no one who came to Caesarea who had first-hand evidence. The very ones in Jerusalem who laid the accusation never went to Caesarea. There was no first-hand evidence because the people that had been in Jerusalem did not come to Caesarea. Unless you have first-hand evidence, you're just spinning your wheels. It may sound nice, but it's no trip.

Acts 24:20

“if” – delete

“any” – what

“evil doing in me” – evil I did

“council” - Sanhedrin

Acts 24:21

“voice” - utterance

“touching” - concerning

“called in question” - judged

That's exactly what he did in the Sanhedrin. We read that earlier, right? That's the only thing they could have had against him, that's the only uproar he made; was right in the temple when he said, “I'm a Pharisee and I believe in the resurrection.” And he said, “That's the only one thing they could lay on me.” Did Paul tell the truth? Right down the line. The rest of them that came to accuse lied like crazy.

Acts 24:22

“And” - now

“*that way*” - the way

“deferred them” - got rid of them

“when Lysias...shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter” – i.e. when he comes down we'll talk it over

Acts 24:23

There were three types of imprisonment. This next verse says he commanded a centurion to keep Paul.

“Paul” – “him” is the text

One type of imprisonment is the common prison that Paul and Silas were in at Philippi. A second type of imprisonment was a military imprisonment, where you were chained to a soldier. A third type of imprisonment is, what is referred to in Roman law as, free custody. You and I would call it, today, released on bail. Apparently, the second type is the one that occurred here to Paul. It's sure something, isn't it?

Acts 24:24

“Drusilla” - This Drusilla was quite a gal, do you know that? She had two sisters. This gal was one of the daughters, of the three daughters, of Herod Agrippa I. It was her father that had murdered James; the lord's brother; great family. Her great-grandfather is the one who beheaded John the Baptist. No it wasn't, that was her great-uncle who did that trip. Her great-grandfather is the one who slew those children under two years old in Bethlehem. I forget who she had been married to. She had been married to some other guy and Felix loved her up good and got her to marry him. I forget what the guy's name was. [Azizus] That's it; right. According to tradition, Josephus, I think, is the one who makes the statement; that she perished in the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. Anyway, she's quite a gal.

Now, you see, that **verse 22**: “when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of the way...” From whom did Felix get this greater information than the rest had? He was married to Drusilla. That's how he heard all those negative things; how he got all that information about the way, because he was married to Drusilla, a Jewess in back-ground. Really something, isn't it?

You see it's like in Germany and England in years past; you had to marry the right person in order to bring power structures together, governmentally. Same thing was true here. He wanted to be a goody-goody boy for the province, so he married Drusilla; got her in. I think one of the reasons he was so anxious to have her is because he had just murdered the high priest-. Felix decapitated him; he had chopped his head off. Of course, being married to Drusilla, it sort of tied the stuff together and gave him added power and a little bit more security.

Acts 24:25

“temperance” - self-control

“Felix trembled” - he really got to Felix. Very great; he talked about righteousness, he talked about self-control and then he talked about the Judgment to come. And old Felix got real shook. The old gospel preachers call it, “when you get convicted.” He got real convicted. That's your old evangelical background. I like that. It's beautiful.

“Go thy way for this time” – “Get out of here for the time being”

“when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” - he never got around to “convenient season” in the next two years

“season” – opportunity - “As I have a convenient opportunity. As it fits into my schedule, your case will come up.” It takes two years.

All justice that is not swift, and by swift I do not mean; without proper judgment, but, any judgment, any court of law that holds, in abeyance decisions that should be made over an honest period of time will always be wrong decisions. It will be justice that is not just. All justice is swift. By swift you don't mean; too speedy, it means; swift, which means; take care of the matter when it occurs.

The point is; I know some people have been in jail for five years before it finally comes up to a decision. Same thing here; two years, just lets him rot. The reason cases stack up is because you don't handle them. Once they start stacking up, they keep stacking up, stacking up, stacking up.

Sooner or later you're going to have to handle them anyway. Why not handle them then? Oh, people get paid. Money is involved. Negotiations are involved: a bunch of crap.

Acts 24:26

This verse tells you this.

“also” – should go between “him” and “Paul”

He was getting a little underneath the table from some of the guys and he was hoping that Paul would try to negotiate.

“wherefore he sent for him the oftener” – “wherefore also he sent for him the oftener also”

“communed with him” – i.e. sat and rapped with him – he said, “Paul, how are you doing? We're pretty good to you, aren't we, Paul? You know we give you bread and milk in the morning and so forth.”

The reason he brought him in to commune with him is because he was looking for a deal and Paul never gave him a deal. Instead of giving him a deal, he just sat. Now Paul in his sense-knowledge could have said, “God said I've got to get to Jerusalem. I'll buy him off.” And I'm sure, if Philip was still around (it doesn't say he was, because in all those two years, it doesn't say a thing about those poor fellows like Philip). But he had freedom to see people and I'm sure some came to see him. I'm pretty sure if Paul would have said, “Look fellows, why don't you go out among the saints and collect \$100,” they would have done it and he would have given it to the fellow underneath the table, and the fellow would have said, “Okay, you're free,” and he could have gone to Rome. He didn't do it, he just didn't do it. It sure is something.

Acts 24:27

“Porcius Festus” - he's the fatty. His pictures are like that too; that you see.

“came into Felix's room” - took over Felix's position

“left Paul bound” - he knew Festus was coming and in order to (because of Drusilla, who he was married to) keep the Jews happy, so there would be no great upsurge or anything. He had the freedom as Ford [ex-President, Ford] did, but he didn't do it. Ford did it the first or second month. He didn't even do it after two years.

He could've turn Paul free because he knew there was nothing legally against Paul. It was a religious argument between the Jews and Paul. It had nothing to do with government whatsoever. He should have, in all honesty, turned him loose long before this, but he didn't even do it at the end of two years, because he wanted to please the Jews, because Paul hadn't given him any money underneath the table.

It's those two years that there is no record in the Book of Acts or any place in history or any other place that Paul ever won one soul to the lord. It was Nero who replaced Felix with Festus because Festus was a friend of Nero's; like government appointments today, usually depend upon friendship, so many times anyway. That's how you get to be an Ambassador. Well, that's the great 23rd and 24th chapter of Acts. It's sure something.