

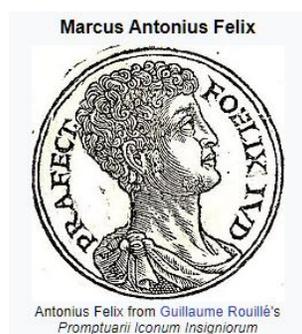
# Acts of the Apostles: Bible Study Outline #8

## Overview / Outline

- **T. Paul Speaks Before the Sanhedrin (23:1-10) / Paul Strengthened by the Lord (23:11) / Conspiracy to Kill Paul (23:12-22)/ Roman Soldiers Transfer Paul to Caesarea (23:23-35)**

**Summary:** As the commander prepared to "examine" Paul by scourging, the apostle quickly revealed that he was a Roman citizen and entitled to all the legal protection afforded citizens. Acts of the Apostles by David Webb © 2013 179 The following day the Roman commander ordered the chief priests and the council (the Sanhedrin) to appear before him in hopes of learning why the Jews were so intent on harming Paul. However, as soon as Paul said, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged," the members of the council began arguing among themselves. The Pharisees in the council, who naturally believed in the resurrection of the dead, were immediately set at odds against the Sadducees who denied any claims of resurrection. Paul's success at setting the members of the council against one another so enraged his enemies that a plot was immediately formed to kill him. Some even vowed "we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul" (Acts 23:14). When word of the plot reached the Roman commander, he ordered that Paul to be taken to Caesarea during the night under heavy armed guard. Paul would not only be protected there, but also be permitted to plead his case before the governor, Felix.

- What was Paul's opening defense before the council, and what happened when he said it?
- What was Paul's reaction and how did he publicly shame the high priest?
- How did Paul turn the members of the council against one another?
- What was the response of the Pharisees? Who in Acts made a similar argument regarding the preaching of the apostles?
- How did the Lord reassure Paul that his life would not end in Jerusalem?
- What was the vow Paul's enemies had taken, and how did they plan to seize Paul?
- Who heard of this ambush and what did he do?
- What did the commander do to protect Paul from this plot, and where did he send him?
- How did the commander, Claudius Lysias, explain the plot against Paul and his reason for sending the apostle to Felix?
- What were the soldiers guarding Paul ordered to do after arriving in Antipatris and who was left to guard Paul?
- After Paul arrived in Caesarea, what did Felix do upon reading the letter from Claudius Lysias?



Marcus Antonius Felix was a brother of Marcus Antonius Pallas, a freedman and a powerful courtier of the emperor Claudius. He was so influential that he could convince the ruler of the Roman empire to marry his niece Agrippina Minor and adopt her son Nero. According to Flavius Josephus, Felix suppressed bands of bandits and the messianic movement of the Egyptian prophet. Josephus also accuses Felix of ordering the assassination of the high priest Jonathan by religious fanatics. Yet, it comes as no surprise that the Roman historian Tacitus calls Felix' behavior "tyrannical". He often ordered harsh measures - for example to suppress riots in Caesarea. According to the *Acts of the Apostles*, the Christian teacher Paul was put on trial, but Felix never pronounced sentence, because he was hoping for bribes. Nevertheless, the apostle was kept imprisoned for two years (56-58). In 58, the inhabitants of Caesarea appealed to the emperor Nero and told him about the riots. Felix was recalled, but Pallas made sure that his brother was not convicted.

# Acts of the Apostles: Bible Study Outline #8

- **U. Paul's Imprisonment in Caesarea / Accusations Presented against Paul (24:1-9) / Paul's Defense before Felix (24:10-21) / Paul's Case Put on Hold for Two Years (24:22-27)**

**Summary:** When the apostle Paul appears before the governor Felix he makes a passionate defense against the charges leveled against him. Those charges include being "a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5). In addition, Paul was charged once again with having defiled the temple. However, according to Paul, his accusers "neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city" (Acts 24:12). Paul did freely admit to being a follower of Jesus Christ who had been resurrected from the dead. Therefore, Felix decides to postpone any decision until Lysias the commander comes to testify. This allowed Paul a certain amount of freedom, and an opportunity to receive visitors and friends. When Felix and his wife Drusilla (who was Jewish) asked to hear Paul speak again, "he reason about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come" (Acts 24:25a). Felix was terrified by the things Paul said, and asked that the apostle "Go away for now; when I have a more convenient time I will call for you" (Acts 24:25b). Felix had hoped Paul would offer a bribe for his freedom, but when that failed to materialize, Felix seemed to befriend Paul and talked with him often over the next two years.

- What are the specific charges made against Paul?
- How does Paul use the "the Law" and "the Prophets" to defend his actions?
- Where did Paul say his accusers should have gone to seek legal action against him?
- What does Paul say is the reason for him being judged before Felix?
- What was it that frightened Felix? Why do you think this troubled Felix?

- **V. Paul's Trial before Festus; "I appeal to Caesar!"(25:1-12) / Festus Consults with King Agrippa (25:13-22) / Paul's Defense before Agrippa (25:23-26:11)**

**Summary:** Felix was eventually replaced as governor by Porcius Festus. Wanting to appease to the Jews, Festus refused to grant Paul's freedom. Meanwhile, the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem asked Festus to bring Paul back to Jerusalem to answer the charges against him in their courts. Their plan, however, was to ambush Paul before he arrived and kill him once and for all. Instead, Festus insisted that Paul's accusers to come to Caesarea to state their case. And when they arrived, the once again accused Paul of things they could not prove. Festus knew the Jews wanted to adjudicate this matter in Jerusalem, and so he asked Paul if he would have any issues with going there to answer for himself. However, Paul knew this would most likely result in his untimely death, and therefore appealed to have his case heard by Caesar himself in Rome. Since Festus would need to have the charges against Paul well documented and clarified, he asks for King Agrippa and Bernice to hear Paul's defense of the chargers brought against him.

- Who informed Festus about Paul? What was the motive of Jews for Paul? What was Festus' response?
- How does Luke describe the charges the Jews made against Paul?
- What did Paul request to guarantee that his case would be tried under Roman law?
- What are the principle points Festus brought up to Agrippa about Paul's case?

**King Agrippa II** - son of the foregoing, was born at Rome, A.D. 27. He was the brother of Bernice and Drusilla. The Emperor Claudius (A.D. 48) invested him with the office of superintendent of the Temple of Jerusalem, and made him governor (A.D. 50) of Chalcis. He was afterwards raised to the rank of king, and made governor over the tetrarchy of Philip and Lysanias ( Acts 25:13 ; Acts 26:2 Acts 26:7 ). It was before him that Paul delivered (A.D. 59) his speech recorded in Acts 26 . His private life was very profligate. He died (the last of his race) at Rome, at the age of about seventy years, A.D. 100.

**Bernice** - bearer of victory, the eldest daughter of Agrippa I., the Herod Agrippa of Acts 12:20 . After the early death of her first husband she was married to her uncle Herod, king of Chalcis. After his death (A.D. 40) she lived in incestuous connection with her brother Agrippa II. ( Acts 25:13 Acts 25:23 ; 26:30 ). They joined the Romans at the outbreak of the final war between them and the Jews, and lived afterwards at Rome.