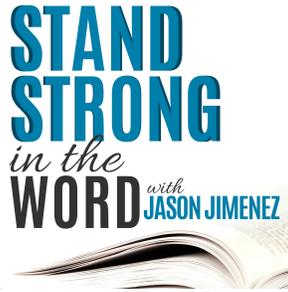


“PAUL ON TRIAL”
Acts 24:1-27

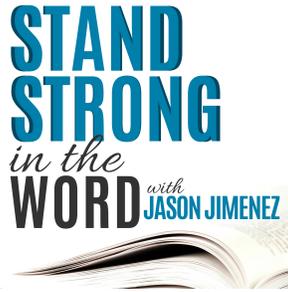
I. The Case is Made Against Paul (24:1-9)

1. *And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a spokesman, one Tertullus. They laid before the governor their case against Paul.* The Sanhedrin hire an attorney, Tertullus, who is familiar with both Roman and Jewish law.
2. ² *And when he had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying:* The legal process is straightforward: The accusers presented whatever evidence they had before the magistrates and the defendant would make his/her case afterwards. The defendant could appeal to a governor and (if need be) to Caesar himself.
 - A. *“Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since by your foresight, most excellent Felix (Marcus Antonius Felix, AD 52-59), reforms are being made for this nation, ³ in every way and everywhere we accept this with all gratitude.* Tertullus appeals to Felix as a great and honorable ruler. However, that was not the case.
 - B. ⁴ *But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly. ⁵ For we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. ⁶ He even tried to profane the temple, but we seized him. ⁸ By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him.”* Tertullus falsely portrays Paul as a Nazarite who is a disturber of the peace just like Jesus. His case against Paul is threefold: (1) sedition (political treason), (2) association with a violent sect (heresy), and (3) desecrating the temple.
3. ⁹ *The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all these things were so.* The Jews had no concrete evidence to back up their claims, so they relied on their high status to convince Felix to side with them.



II. Paul Gives a Defense to Silence His Accusers (23:10-23)

1. ¹⁰ *And when the governor had nodded to him to speak, Paul replied:* Paul's defense is not only about proving his innocence but providing proof that Jesus Christ is the Messiah.
2. *"Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense. ¹¹ You can verify that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem, ¹² and they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, either in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city. ¹³ Neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me.* Paul refutes the accusation of sedition by arguing he had only been in Jerusalem for twelve days. Hardly enough time to produce a riot of great magnitude or incite a revolution to overthrow Roman rule. Paul spent five days in Caesarea and the remaining seven days in Jerusalem.
3. ¹⁴ *But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, ¹⁵ having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.* Paul argues that the Way (Christianity) is rooted in Judaism. Paul never undermined the Law; but instead, he looked to the hope of resurrection (see Job 19:25-27; Dan. 12:2).
4. ¹⁶ *So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.* Paul not only refutes the false charges brought against him but also points to his character as a factor of innocence.
5. ¹⁷ *Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings.* Paul is referring to the gifts that was collected from the Gentile churches (Rom. 15:25-27; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8-9).
6. ¹⁸ *While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or tumult. But some Jews from Asia— ¹⁹ they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, should they have anything against me. ²⁰ Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, ²¹ other than this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: 'It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.'* " In response to the third accusation (desecration), Paul points out that his accusers (Jews from Asia) aren't even present to give their account.



Therefore, without having any eyewitnesses, the charges against Paul cannot be corroborated. Not to mention, the charges had more to do with Jewish law than Roman law.

7. ²² *But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, put them off, saying, “When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case.”* ²³ *Then he gave orders to the centurion that he should be kept in custody but have some liberty, and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs.* Felix’s third wife, Drusilla (a Jew and daughter of Herod Agrippa I; great niece of Herod who killed John the Baptist), and her brother, king Agrippa II, may have been the ones who educated him on Judaism and Christianity. *I will decide your case*—By keeping Paul detained without proof of guilt, Felix attempts to appease the Jews while hoping Paul’s companions will bribe him with money.

III. Felix Comes to Hear Paul Teach God’s Truth (24:24-27)

1. ²⁴ *After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus.* ²⁵ *And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, “Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you.”* Felix had stolen Drusilla from the king of Emesa in Syria. *Heard him speak*—Felix was disturbed by what Paul taught. Herod Antipas felt the same way after hearing John the Baptist teach (see Matt. 14:1-10).
2. ²⁶ *At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. So he sent for him often and conversed with him.* Felix clearly knew Paul was innocent, but he kept him under house arrest in hopes of receiving money to have him released.
3. ²⁷ *When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.* It’s likely that Luke recorded much of the book of Acts during these two years. *Succeeded by Porcius Festus*—In AD 59, Felix was summoned to Rome after receiving multiple complaints from the Jews about his poor and corrupt leadership. Festus replaces Felix, but dies two years in office (AD 62).