

# PAULINE EPISTLES

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# PAUL'S TRIAL BEFORE GOVERNOR FELIX

**SUMMARY:** The first court appearance took place five days after Paul arrived in Caesarea. The Jews prepared a three count charges against Paul with the help of their Lawyer, Tertullus. Paul in his defense refutes the charges and the Governor Felix adjourned the hearing to a latter date.

## PRESENT IN THE COURT:

Governor Antonius Felix: Presiding Judge

### THE PLAINTIFF PARTY

Ananias            The High Priest

Elders            Key leaders of the Sanhedrin

Tertullus            Lawyer

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# PAUL'S TRIAL BEFORE GOVERNOR FELIX

DEFENDANT ( 2 Kings 6:16-17 )

Apostle Paul —————→ Defendant

God the father —————→ The owner of the chamber  
and sender of Advocate

Jesus Christ —————→ Senior Advocate  
(1 John 2:1)

Holy Ghost —————→ Senior Advocate  
(Mark 13:11, John 14:16-17)

Innumerable company of Angels —————→ Ministering Spirits  
(Heb. 1:14, 12:22)

# WHO IS GOVERNOR ANTONIUS FELIX?

- Governor Felix was a Greek freedman
- He was the 4<sup>th</sup> Roman procurator of Judea province (AD 52-59)
- Governor Felix and his elder brother Pallas were slaves who were freed by the mother of the Emperor.
- Antonius Pallas served as a secretary during the reign of Emperor Claudius and according to the Jewish historian Tacitus, Felix came to limelight by the connection of his brother Pallas.
- Upon becoming governor, he murdered Jonathan, the High Priest because he was against the style of his leadership (Josephus, Flavius. Antiquities of the Jews)

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# WHO IS GOVERNOR ANTONIUS FELIX?

- He desired to receive bribe from Apostle Paul in exchange for his freedom
- Since Paul didn't give in to his desire for bribe, he left Paul in prison for two years as a favor to the Jews
- History holds it that Felix was a bad man.
- Tacitus , the historian said about Felix “He had the office of a king and he ruled it with the mind of a slave”
- During his reign, he crucified thousands of people and was thoroughly hated by the Jews.

# THE PROSECUTOR ARGUMENT

Tertullus their advocate began his prosecution of Paul by flattering governor Felix in an attempt to win his mind.

“... Seeing that by thee we enjoyed great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, we accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with thankfulness ....”

**Acts 24 : 2 - 3**

## Note:

- I want us to note that whatever Tertullus said about governor Felix was the exact opposite of the truth of him from history.

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# THE PROSECUTOR ARGUMENT

## Note:

- According to the historian Tacitus, governor Felix was a master in cruelty and lust.
- The period he governed Judea was characterized by severe unrest and uprisings.
- So the opening testimony of Barrister Tertullus was false

## THREE - COUNT CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST PAUL

1. Troublemaker (Loimon) of the Roman world: In verse 5 Tertullus accused Paul by saying” we found this man a pestilent fellow and a mover of sedition among the Jews throughout the world”

### Note:

- Remember this was the same charge King Ahab brought against Elijah in **1 Kings 18:17-18**. “**Ahab said unto him art thou he that troubleth Israel?**” Elijah didn’t agree with Ahab’s analysis of him. He told him “**I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house**”
- Like Elijah, Paul was not a troubler of the Roman world in a negative sense, except for those who hated the gospel
- The charge of being a troublemaker was a serious...  
**...continued**



## THREE - COUNT CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST PAUL

...political charge because the authority of Rome would do anything to maintain peace and order. So by this charge Tertullus was pointing to the governor to exterminate Paul if he is truly representing Rome.

# THE JEWS ARE THE REAL TROUBLEMAKERS NOT PAUL

## SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE

- Yes, Paul was involved in few riots. But The Jews instigated the riot and not Paul.
- (i) “But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts” Acts 13:50
- (ii) “And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them,” Acts 14:5
- (iii) “But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, ...

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# THE JEWS NOT PAUL ARE THE REAL TROUBLEMAKERS

## SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE

...and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.” Acts 17:5

(iv) “But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people”. Acts 17:13

(v) “Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.”

➤ You can see for your self again that Barrister Tertullus twisted the truth in order to set Felix against Paul

## THREE - COUNT CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST PAUL

2. Ringleader of the Nazarene sect: This was also a politically loaded charge. Tertullus was accusing Paul of belonging to an illegal movement which, if governor Felix do not put a stop to it, would threaten the peace of Rome.
3. Defiled the Temple: In verse 6, Tertullus pressed his third charge against Paul that he tried to desecrate the temple. After he was done with his charges, "the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so" Acts 24:9

## THE DEFENSE MADE BY PAUL

- When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul in verse Ten opens with a positive word but not one of flattery like Tertullus “knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation ,I cheerfully make my defense”. This was true. Felix had been governing Judea since AD 52 and it was now AD 57.

## PAUL DENIED THE FIRST CHARGE MADE AGAINST HIM: (verse 11-21)

- “You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship”. In other words, Paul was saying “I haven’t had time to stir up trouble and seditions all over this land as I am being accused of doing. If you don’t believe me do some investigation on your own”

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# THE DEFENSE MADE BY PAUL

## POINTS: (verse 12-13)

1. My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple
2. I didn't stir up any crowd in the synagogues nor else where in the city.
3. They (the accusers) can not prove to you (Felix) the charges they are now making against me. (No witnesses to testify against Paul )

## PAUL PLEADED GUILTY TO THE SECOND CHARGE AND EXPLAINED: ( verse 14)

- “I admit that I worship the God of my father as a follower of the way, which they call heresy”

# THE DEFENSE MADE BY PAUL

## POINTS:

4. The God of this way is not different and separate from the God of the Old Testament religion. Infact, this way is the fulfillment of the Old Testament way (Luke 24:25-27)
5. This way is all about hope towards God and the resurrection of the dead which they also believe.
6. They are trying to say that I am worshiping a different God , but these charges are absolutely false. I worship the same God they worship.

## **PAUL DENIED THE THIRD CHARGE AGAINST HIM:**

He refuted that charge by saying “I came to Jerusalem to present offering , to help my Jewish brothers. I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the Temple and was not with multitude nor did I desecrate the temple”

## **PAUL’S CLOSING ARGUMENT:**

He said that there are some Jews from Asia “ who ought to have been here before thee and object if they had ought against me” (verse18-19)

## **POINTS:**

1. “Where are my accusers?” Paul was asking. He knew it was against the Roman law to accuse someone and then not show up in court.

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## PAUL'S CLOSING ARGUMENT:

2. Those Jews are the one that can level charges against me. Not you Tertullus. Where are they? Why are they not here? Why are there no eye witness ? Where is the proof? Why has there been no attempt to verify these charges?
3. In the light of the above, Paul argues that they have no charge against him.
4. The case is as dead as dodo (Mike Ozekhome, SAN)

## ADJOURNMENT OF PROCEEDINGS

- Paul beautifully argued his case and concluded his defense. The corrupt governor Felix knew that Paul was utterly innocent, but he refused to declare a verdict which would have exonerated Paul and enabled him to go free.
- As the Roman authority who was at the site of incidence, Commander Claudius before the trial in his letter to governor Felix proclaimed Paul's innocence. (Acts 23:29)
- Governor Felix knew that Paul was innocent , but he refused to let him go free.

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# ADJOURNMENT OF PROCEEDINGS

- He was greedy and saw this as an avenue to take bribe (Acts 24:26)
- He adjourned the case and commanded Paul to be taken back to prison but this time gave him liberty of visit from friends and family.

**THE NEXT ADJOURNED DATE WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO YOU; COURT RISE**

WE CONTINUE NEXT WEEK

THANKS