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**A0939 – September 27, 2009 – Acts 24:1-7 – Paul Before Felix**

In the Book of Acts we've seen many events unfold in the early church and in all of them we've seen the promise that Christ stated in Matt 16:18, "I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." That has come true over and over and over. Despite opposition there is advance and there are principles, many different principles that we can learn from this. One principle is the sovereign plan of God will come to pass. No one and no thing can stop it. Not Caesar, not Communism, not Islam. The gates of Hades shall not prevail. The word of Jesus Christ shall. And so throughout the book of Acts we observe the Holy Spirit leading the way. It is not by the human actors that the advance takes place. The men in Jerusalem didn't want to go out of Jerusalem. It took a church fight to get things moving out of Jerusalem and so it is throughout the early church. Development only took place when He led the way. The second principle is human responsibility in the plan. Human beings do play a role, whether they're Jewish leaders like Gamaliel and the Sanhedrin or Roman rulers like Gallio and Felix or Apostles like Peter and Paul. All these men play a role in the unfolding plan of God for history. And so Acts is an unfolding drama in history of how God rules history and how men fit into that history.

Now what we're observing with Paul in these last chapters is the principle of 1 Cor 10:13. Every Christian needs Matt 16:18 and 1 Cor 10:13 in order to trust, in order to trust that the situations we face in life will not overwhelm us. For Paul says, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it." Now that was written by Paul, a man that faced tremendous temptations to give in and give up. And it's just packed with principles we can take home. One is that there is no such thing

as your unique situation. Get over yourself. All situations are common to man. The things we face in life are faced by other men in life. A second principle that presupposes is that God rules history. If there is no unique situation then God must control every situation and that's why it says God "will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able." So whatever is happening in your life, whatever the situation God thinks you're up to it. The situation is happening because God by sovereign permission allowed it to happen. And therefore every plan of Satan to attack your life had to go before God and He had to give it the okay before it happened. I direct you to Job chapters 1-2 if you want to look into it more. A third principle of this verse is that there's no such thing as an inescapable situation, "but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also." God writes history such that no matter the situation you are in there's always an escape hatch. What kind of a God would He be if He boxed us in with no way out? That's not our God; God always gives the believer a way out.

Now 1 Cor 10:13 is the principle at work in Acts 23 and in Acts 24. Paul has been given the word of God, Acts 23:11, this is God's plan for your life, so let's look at it again. Paul, "Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also." Now that's a sovereign declaration of where history is going. And every time God sovereignly declares where history is going you can count on opposition. And the opposition is Satan because he's at war with God. And so every move of Satan is carefully calculated to thwart the plan of God because if he can do that then obviously he rules history and God doesn't. And so Paul is inserted here into this drama, I'm going to get you to Rome Paul and Satan says no you're not. We saw last week how this played out in Acts 23. 40 Jews conspired to murder Paul which if successful would have stopped the plan of God. But God countered the opposition by having Paul's nephew overhear the plot, reveal it to Paul who got him an audience with the commander who acted promptly to move Paul out by night to Caesarea under armed guard of 470 Roman soldiers. So Paul was in a jam but who provides a way of escape? God provides a way of escape. God "...will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also." God allowed the conspiracy to form but God provided the way of escape also.

Now today in Acts 24 we see Paul in another jam and this time another way of escape. The escape in chapter 23 was the Roman military, divine institution number 4. The escape in chapter 24 is also under divine institution number 4, a court trial. Again, Satan is going to try to jam Paul and we want to see how Paul finds a way of escape. This is the drama of history. This is the meaning of history. History would be boring if we didn't know it was something more than just such and such happened in this year. Who cares? If there's no rhyme or reason for it I'm not interested in learning it. This is why the way history is taught in the public classroom is boring. There's no purpose, no goal, no meaning of history at all. It's just one date after another date after another date, memorize it for the quiz on Friday, and forget it by Monday. In the biblical frame of reference history has direction, it has meaning, it has purpose, it's going some place and that place is marked out in advance which means now we get to watch it unfold like a drama. And we get to ask questions that mean something, "How is God going to work it? And it's like a master tapestry unfolding. That's what makes history interesting. We know where God is going in the broad outlines but the details we have to wait and see how He does it. And that keeps things interesting, that brings drama. So let me introduce you to a little drama of history in Acts 24.

Paul, in Acts 24 is in an adverse situation. He's in prison and at this point Paul can be asking, well, that's just great, I've come to the end of the road, I'm not going to get to Rome, I'm stuck in prison, I can't minister the word of God and so the question naturally arises, is God faithful? Is God faithful to get me out of the jam? God said I'm going to get you to Rome but this doesn't look like Rome to me, this looks like a prison cell. That's the situation Paul's in. Looked at from that perspective the situation looks pretty bleak. If you look just at individual events in your life they don't make sense, they only make sense in the larger plan God has for your life. When you start linking the events together you can start seeing the pattern and things start making sense. And so let's see how God provides a way of escape for Paul in this one. In verse 1 we have a court trial. It occurs in Caesarea and this is God's way of escape. The first way of escape was the Roman military who escorted Paul out of the Antonia Fortress to safety. The second way of escape is the Roman court system. In both escapes Paul has to engage his human responsibility but in both cases they're just natural means. Sometimes Christians get it in their heads that the way of escape is going to be some great miraculous thing,

God is going to send fireworks or something. Quite frankly that is rarely the way God provides an escape. The usual way is God already has a natural means in place and it's there waiting for you to exercise your responsibility and use it. So the way of escape doesn't necessarily mean God is just going to supernaturally lift you out of the situation. It may mean you're going to have to apply the faith technique and apply God's word to the situation. Man is a responsible creature so don't just sit there like a rock and be passive. Use what God has given you and you'll find the way of escape.

Now in Acts 24:1 there's a court trial. The Roman court trial, if you want to call it that, is Paul's means of escape. **After five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders, with an attorney named Tertullus.** So we have **Ananias**, he's the **high priest** we met last time, he's corrupt, **some elders** and they're attorney **Tertullus**, he's a Roman lawyer and we know that because his name is Roman and besides they're going into a Roman court not a Jewish court. So you want someone who knows the ins and outs of Roman law to state your case. **Tertullus** is the man of the hour. Literally he's a forensic orator, so he's skilled in rhetoric and we'll see more of that in a moment. **And they brought charges to the governor** and that's Felix. They're in Caesarea. With a name like **Caesarea** it's obviously a Roman city, it was built by Herod the Great and Augustus Caesar was his patron so he named it **Caesarea**. Herod was called Great because he was a great builder. He built all kinds of things all over the land of Israel so when you go to Israel you'll see Herodian masonry all over the place and here at Caesarea he had a palace overlooking the Mediterranean. The governor stayed in the palace and this is probably where Paul was kept in custody and where the trial took place. The palace had two levels and the lower level had salt baths, and this is probably where the trial was held. We have an inscription on a rock that was discovered and you can read part of it. At the top it reads TIBERIEUM which is a reference to Emperor Tiberius and underneath that you see USPILATUS and that's a reference to Pontius Pilate, you can't read all of his first name but you can read all of his second, so we have this archaeological discovery. Pilate was governor when Christ was crucified, he presided over that trial and he lived in this palace and now Felix is the governor and he's presiding over Paul's trial and he lives in the palace. So again you see the links between Christ and Paul in how things played out. So you can see the pattern in history. It's not by chance the way things are happening. It's all reminiscent to draw your attention to the drama.

In vv 2, 3 and 4 **Tertullus** introduces the case and this is one of the most ridiculous cases of flattery in all of case history. <sup>2</sup>**After Paul had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying to the governor, “Since we have through you attained much peace, and since by your providence reforms are being carried out for this nation, <sup>3</sup>we acknowledge *this* in every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. <sup>4</sup>But, that I may not weary you any further, I beg you to grant us, by your kindness, a brief hearing.** Now granted we are probably reading a summary of what was said but if Luke is recording proportion of time spent by Tertullus on introductions and actual accusations then this is a severe case of flattery because he spends 40 words on flattery and just 31 on accusations.

So let's look at it. V 2, **“Since we have through you attained much peace,** Felix brought peace? Felix? Felix who? Felix was the governor who while suppressing robbers in his realm was hiring robbers to murder the high priest Jonathan! Felix is the guy who could never keep peace between the Jews and the Romans. It was a constant riot! Which is why v 27 says he was succeeded by Porcius Festus, he let it get out of control one too many times and the emperor said, that's it, you're out of there. So we know he's really laying it on thick here. It sounds more like a campaign speech than an introduction. Verse 4, **But, that I may not weary you any further, I beg you to grant us, by your kindness, a brief hearing.** In other words he's making it out like Felix is granting them a favor by listening to the case. He's not granting them a favor. It's his job to hear cases. He did it most days.

Now why, if you were a lawyer, would you spend 60% of your time flattering the judge? Because you don't have a case. So this is buttering up the judge. And now that he's spent 60% of the time buttering up he finally gets to the accusations - v 5, there are four of them.

The first one, **For we have found this man a real pest.** Now that right there means that Paul marches to the tune of a different drummer. And you, if you live a consistent Christian lifestyle will also be labeled a **real pest.** It goes on and on because you just won't agree with the *status quo*. Society insist that you send your kids to public school and this insistence grows stronger and stronger every day mind you, but it's all done so they can train

your children in the evolutionary framework and so if you take your kids out of all that and train them in the creation framework then you're labeled a pest. You're labeled a pest because you're a threat. A threat to what? A threat to their program. See, they know very well that the two frameworks can't co-exist. They don't take seriously Christians that try to make them co-exist. Anyone can see that the two statements in the beginning God and in the beginning Gas can't co-exist. So they aren't threatened by the kind of a Christian that says they can.

Who they're threatened by is the Christian that says I bring all things captive to the word of God. Because they're program says I bring all things captive to the word of man. And there's not a particle of common ground between those two commitments. Either the word of God is ultimate or the word of man is ultimate. But it can't be both. Now we all know this to be true in experience. We all know there's no common ground between those two positions. This is why it's so tense trying to talk to someone on the other side of the fence. We just don't agree on anything. It doesn't matter what you're talking about there's always a tension. So eventually we end up talking about nothing, what happened on Dancing With the Stars last night or some other baloney, because we don't have any common ground on ultimate issues.

Let's see why Paul was labeled a pest. It goes back to a little lesson Paul started learning from Stephen in Acts 6. Paul and Stephen were both Diaspora Jews and we think they attended the same synagogue in Jerusalem, the Synagogue of the Freedmen. And Paul at the time was in training under Rabban Gamaliel, he was the next big shot in Judaism. But Stephen was just a layman with no formal training. And one day he and Paul started having a little fireside chat down at the synagogue and Stephen was ripping Paul to shreds. And that really got under Paul's skin. This Stephen guy is a real pest. So what do you do when you have a pest? You call the exterminator. Which is what Paul did. And from Stephen's speech in Acts 7 we can tell exactly what Stephen had said to Paul because he said it to the entire Sanhedrin and if you want to see some angry lawyers, lawyers who can't control their emotions just read Acts 7. By the end of that little defense they hated Stephen. What had Stephen done? Stephen had undermined their whole framework of thinking and living. We call that a worldview. Stephen argued on a worldview level. See there are two ways to argue, they're not totally exclusive but there's a difference. You can argue issues piecemeal. For

example, you can try and defend the resurrection of Jesus Christ and you can bring in the historical argument or you can try to defend the deity of Christ from the logical argument and so forth, and if you do that you are trying to defend one piece at a time. The problem with that approach is the unbeliever just swallows your arguments up in his worldview and re-interprets them. So the other approach, the biblical approach, is you can defend the whole framework of Scripture in one argument. Rather than argue one piece you argue for the puzzle. So in this approach you say, alright, God created the cosmos, He made man and nature so there are your three basic categories; God, man and nature. God made everything very good. Then you shift to the Fall. Man rebelled against God and we call that sin and when man fell nature fell and that's why the world is a mess, that's why we have suffering, that's why we have cancer, that's why we have death. Man sinned against God. Then you go to the Global Flood of Noah and that's where God judged sin so we have an historic act, obviously recorded in the fossil record that God judges sin. And at the same time God was saving those in the Ark. So God makes a way of salvation. And you work your way through Scripture like this, event by event and then obviously the cross makes sense. You've put it in a frame; it doesn't make sense outside of the frame. And so in this approach you're not defending piecemeal, you're saying here's the whole system of Christianity. It all fits together, it's not just pieces, the pieces make a puzzle and this is what the picture looks like. And that's what Stephen taught Paul and that's what made Paul so mad because he couldn't fight the whole system. This shook Paul up and eventually Paul was saved and he went back to the Scriptures and he started putting it together like Stephen. He had Christ's help of course out there in the Syrian deserts. But, in any case then, Paul took his framework and went out on his missionary journeys and he did what Stephen had done to him. He went out and presented the historic framework. And we know he did that because all you have to do is read it in Acts 13, Acts 14 and Acts 17. He emphasizes different events with Jews than Gentiles but in both cases he uses the same exact method, it's a method the Book of Romans spells out systematically. And it's that kind of argument that undermines people's framework and when you do that you really bother people, that's when you've become a pest. In one way it's a compliment. What you say bothers me. And Christianity should bother people. It's going to bother Felix later on in v 25. If people are bothered by you that's good, that means they're seeing something different about you. If no one is bothered by you that's a bad sign because it means they don't see

anything different between you and them. So that about covers the first charge.

The second charge is also in verse 5 and this one is more serious. Paul was a pest but the next one in the NASB describes him as one who **stirs up dissension**. And that is an offense against the Roman government. It meant that Paul was trying to raise an insurrection and overthrow Caesar. And if that can be proved Paul would be guilty of a capital crime and executed. So this is a very serious charge. But just go back through the Book of Acts and write down every riot. How many of them were started by Paul? In Acts 17 Paul was at Thessalonica, read the chapter, Paul didn't start a riot; the Jews started a riot against Paul. Go to Acts 19 at Ephesus, Paul didn't start a riot at Ephesus, Demetrius the silversmith started it. Paul didn't start any of them. What's the argument Luke's making? That Christianity is not a threat to the Roman Empire. Christianity is orderly and respectful in the Roman Empire. Every Roman judge decides that Christianity is a peaceful movement.

The third charge: he's **a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes**. And that is a true charge. So Paul's not going to try to defend against that. Paul is indeed a leader; he's a champion of the Christian faith, what they call the **sect of the Nazarenes**.

The fourth charge, verse 6, **he...tried to desecrate the temple**; and we know all about that charge because that's the event in Acts 21 that led to all this. However, the charge here is less than the charge there, here it only says **he tried to desecrate** it, there they say he did. There's a reason for that we won't go into.

The end of v 6, all of v 7 and the start of v 8 are not in the best manuscripts, you see them in brackets, so we skip on by. V 8, **By examining him yourself concerning all these matters you will be able to ascertain the things of which we accuse him.**" <sup>9</sup>**The Jews also joined in the attack, asserting that these things were so.** So they join in, hear, hear, we agree, and that's no surprise. So that's the end of the indictment. Paul's called up on four charges; he's a pest, he stirs up insurrections, he's a leader, he tried to desecrate the temple. Hopefully you notice there are several lies in



the charges but with all the flattery up front who would notice. That seems to be the hope of the real person behind the charges.

So now we turn to v 10, his defense. And here's a real gentlemen, there's no flattery but there is respect for the court. Here's Paul actively looking for the way of escape and it comes through the court system. He doesn't lie down and get rolled over like a doormat. He uses the system. Verse 10, Paul has to serve as his own defense attorney. He's a very sharp Christian. Christians ought to be very sharp in the area of law. Law comes from God and law is in human language and all of those categories are sourced in the God of Christianity so we ought to be superior in this area. The sad thing is, generally speaking we're not and we get sloppy with the way we defend the faith. It wasn't always that way, the Puritans were very sharp on law and they could whip anyone in the courtroom. But the point is that we ought to be able to engage in logical, rational discourse and not tie ourselves in a knot, we ought to be able to use it as a tool like Paul.

Verse 10, **When the governor had nodded for him to speak, Paul responded: "Knowing that for many years you have been a judge to this nation, I cheerfully make my defense.** Now that's Paul's introduction and it's a respectful one not flattery. What's the implication? If Felix has **been a judge to Israel for many years** then Felix knew something about the Jewish people. He'd been governor for 6-7 years and so he had many dealings with the Jews. He was also married to this little gal Drusilla who enters the picture in v 24 and she was a Jewess so he had learned plenty about Jewish law from his wife. So he's no dummy with respect to Israel and Israel's law.

In verse 11 he begins, **since you can take note of the fact that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. Neither in the temple, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city itself did they find me carrying on a discussion with anyone or causing a riot.** In other words I've only been here **twelve days**. How could I be a pest in **twelve days**? It takes more than **twelve days** to get an insurrection going. People don't just up and riot, they have to be agitated and agitation takes time, so I haven't even been here long enough to be a pest. And further, they never saw me in a dispute with anyone. They didn't see me in the **temple** talking to anyone, they didn't see me in the **synagogue** talking to anyone, and they didn't even see me in the **city** of Jerusalem talking to anybody. I've been alone so how could I have started a riot? Verse 13, **"Nor can they prove to you the charges of which they now accuse me.** And that's a challenge,

prove me wrong, I'm standing here, c'mon, anybody stand up and give some proof, oh, you haven't brought any proof, it's all just words, hot air. So that answers charges one, two and four.

Verse 14, **“But this I admit to you,** and this is his response to charge three and it's a bold response. Paul was an issues man and what he does here is he brings it right back to the real issue. Satan is never interested the real issues so he tries to distract and keep your eyes on the wrong thing. Paul stabs right at the heart of it. **But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets.** Now just look at what Paul has said, yes, I agree I'm a ringleader of **the Way which they call a sect,** they call it a sect, I call it the Way. They call it a sect because that means it's just an offshoot of Judaism. It's a strange group of people that left orthodoxy. Paul says no, **I believe everything,** notice that word, **everything that is in accordance with the Law and the Prophets,** which is shorthand for the OT. **I believe everything that is in accordance with the OT.** Implication? They don't. And therefore I'm not the offshoot from Judaism, they're the offshoot. And that's very quickly how Paul turns the table and puts them on the defense. So right here he's attacking.

Verse 15, he identifies himself with his accusers, **having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.** Now whether they all believed it or not it didn't matter, probably some Pharisees were there. But orthodox theology holds to belief in the two-fold resurrection. It's exactly what the OT teaches in Dan 12:2 and elsewhere. So he's saying I'm orthodox.

Verse 16, **“In view of this,** in view of the two-fold resurrection **I...do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.** What's the argument? That belief in resurrection carries moral impetus. If there's no resurrection then eat, drink, be merry, for tomorrow we die. If there is resurrection you want to keep a clean **conscience** before God because He's the judge.

In vv 17-18 he describes the events leading up to his arrest. **“Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present**

**offerings; <sup>18</sup>in which they found me *occupied* in the temple, having been purified, without *any* crowd or uproar.** It has been five years to be exact. He hadn't been around for five years and then he comes to Jerusalem and the only reason he says I came was **to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings**, I came to do good for my nation. I didn't come here to start a riot, I couldn't have even if I wanted, it's just been twelve days.

And now he makes his strongest point in the case, **But *there were some Jews from Asia*— <sup>19</sup>who ought to have been present before you and to make accusation, if they should have anything against me.** Alright, where are the **Jews from Asia**? They're the one's who started all this on the Temple Mount, they're the ones that should be here. Where are they? Where are my accusers? And this ought to remind you of someone else's trial I've shown throughout - the parallels between Christ and Paul. Here's another one. What went on at Christ's trial? They couldn't get two witnesses to agree on anything. They didn't have any eyewitness testimony. And here it is with Paul, no eyewitness testimony. You've brought four charges against me but you've brought no eyewitnesses and so now Paul is aggressively using the court system, he's found his way of escape.

So Paul says, on the issue of eyewitnesses all these guys have is what happened when I was being interrogated by them, so let's talk about some real evidence. Verse 20, **let these men themselves tell what misdeed they found when I stood before the Council, <sup>21</sup>other than for this one statement which I shouted out while standing among them, 'For the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you today.'**" Now is that a crime? I did say that. And if that's the case that's not a crime at all. That's a belief of orthodox Judaism and orthodox Judaism is a legal religion in the Roman empire so I haven't done a thing. Then v 22, **But Felix, having a more exact knowledge about the Way. put them off saying, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case."** In other words, He knew something about Christianity that made him stop the proceedings. We don't know what it was. Maybe he knew of Gallio's decision in Corinth that Christianity was a legal religion in Rome. Maybe he knew some of the history of Christianity. But in any case he's going to put off deciding the case till he can hear Lysias. And so Paul is going to be held prisoner for two years and this is a concession to the Jews because Felix can't

afford any more problems with the Jews. So this looks like a blow, it looks like Paul's escape hatch has just closed.

But do you know what happened during those two years that we would think was wasted time and gee, isn't this terrible, we've got the greatest Christian on earth locked in jail? Paul for two years was visited by a very close friend. Who was Paul's very close friend? A doctor by the name of Luke. And what was Luke doing during these two years? He was gathering materials for the Gospel of Luke and for the Book of Acts. Turn to Luke 1.

In Luke 1:1-4 we have Luke's account of how he came to write what we call the Gospel of Luke. You'll notice that he didn't get it from a vision, he didn't get it from a dream; he got it by simply doing historic research; inspiration covers and includes the secondary means of historic research. "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, <sup>2</sup>just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, <sup>3</sup>it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; <sup>4</sup>so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught." Notice that in v 3, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning. When's the beginning? The beginning is the virgin birth, so Luke at some earlier time interviewed Mary, which is why we have the most detailed account of everything that happened with Mary in Luke's Gospel. He went into painstaking detail as we would imagine a doctor would if a girl claimed a virgin birth. So he did careful research to write these two volumes and so for two years he could have Paul all to himself. If Paul hadn't been in prison who knows where Paul would have been and then Luke couldn't have gotten the information. So Paul is stopped but God isn't stopped. God is getting the data through Luke for the Gospel and the Acts.

Alright, back to Acts 24. So he's made his decision to keep Paul in vv 22-23 which brings us to verse 24, **But some days later Felix arrived with Drusilla, his wife who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul and heard him *speak* about faith in Christ Jesus.** Here they're getting the gospel. And this is significant because Drusilla was a descendant of Herod the Great. One of the vilest men in the NT. We mentioned him earlier with reference to Caesarea. He built the town and here's his great-granddaughter in the very palace he built hearing Paul. Now the Herod family is one family that had

every opportunity to respond to the gospel and they went negative volition. Herod the Great himself we know heard the gospel because what did he do in Matt 2? Killed all the baby boys near Bethlehem. So he had access to Malachi, he'd been told about the king of the Jews and where he was to be born. Then he had a son named Herod Antipas, called the Fox, and he's the one in the Gospels who gave his daughter John the Baptist's head on a silver platter. He knew what John the Baptist preached and he hated it because John was always berating him about marrying his brother's wife. Then you have the third generation Herod Agrippa I and we met him in Acts 12; he was Drusilla's daddy, and he had James the apostle executed. So he evidently heard the gospel and he didn't like it. Drusilla was just a ten year old little girl at the time and she had to see that. At this point she's twenty years old and she's married to Felix. She'd been married to the king of Emesa but when she was sixteen Felix and a magician convinced her to leave her husband and marry Felix. So this is the kind of girl we're talking about, a Jewess but finicky and so she's the fourth generation of Herod and she's going to get the gospel. So the Herod family is a family that had plenty of gospel exposure and they've rejected and rejected and rejected so let's see what happens here.

In v 24 Paul's giving the gospel v 25, **But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, "Go away for the present, and when I find time I will summon you."** So it got too personal for them. Probably they'd never heard such pointed and practical teaching in their entire lives and so when he talked to them about righteousness, self-control and judgment to come they were under conviction and it's very uncomfortable to be under conviction. That was the end of the testimony that day. They rejected the gospel message. <sup>26</sup>**At the same time too, he was hoping that money would be given him by Paul; therefore he also used to send for him quite often and converse with him.** And that shows you the real motive. Paul had said in v 17 he brought alms to the Jewish nation so Felix perked up when he heard that and he thought, maybe Paul has money and if you were rich in those days the way to get out of prison was buy your way out, so Felix is in it for the money, you can see he's corrupt. <sup>27</sup>**But after two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus,** And the story there is that strife broke out between Jewish and Gentile inhabitants of Caesarea and Felix deployed troops to break it up and they killed a lot of Jewish people and the Empire said that's it, you're out of there, you're

causing too many problems among the Jews. **and wishing to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul imprisoned.** So he had the chance to release him, he didn't, he kept the peace.

But returning where we began: How did we start? When you're in a jam what does God provide? A way of escape. Paul found the way of escape. They attempted to convict him in a court of law and Paul found his way through using the law. And so we have another historical event that shows God's word stands. If God says Paul, I will get you to Rome, and My word controls history then Paul will get to Rome. There may be a few jams along the way but with every jam comes a way of escape and Paul very cleverly found it. There is no temptation that has overtaken you but that which is common to man and God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able but will provide the way of escape also, that you shall be able to endure it. With our heads bowed and our eyes closed.

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