

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

BACK TO THE BOOK OF ACTS (BBA)

RLJ-1185

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PART 45: FACING THE EMISSARIES OF SATAN

GOVERNOR FELIX

Felix, whose name means happy, had been a slave but was freed by Claudius Caesar, who ruled from 41-54 A.D., and was appointed Procurator of Judea in 53 A.D. Very little else is known about his background.

According to historical records, while Felix was governor, he indulged in all kind of cruelties and lust which did little to satisfy fleshly desires. He was a criminal that manipulated the court system for his own purpose.

Jonathan, the Jewish high priest at that time, publicly exposed him for his evil deeds and Felix responded by bribing Doras, who was a close friend of Jonathan, into hiring a group of assassins (Zealots) to murder him on his way to the temple.

Felix was married, but it didn't stop him from lusting after Drusilla, the daughter of King Herod Agrippa. Drusilla was married to King Azizus of Emesa (a city state north of Damascus). Felix enlisted the services of Simon, a magician, who put a spell on Drusilla and lured her away from Azizus. When Felix proposed marriage to Drusilla, she divorced Azizus and married Felix.

Due to Jewish rioting in the streets of Caesarea, Felix was recalled to Rome to stand trial for the atrocities he had committed in Judea. He was able to avoid being punished through his brother Pallas, which showed once again the corruption in the Roman Empire.

PAUL FACES THE CROOKED GOVERNOR

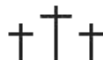
Roman courts were well known for being corrupt; justice could be purchased with huge sums of money or the intervention of a powerful political leader.

Paul faced the hostile Jewish leadership from Jerusalem and was at the mercy of an immoral governor. He had no human defense attorney, while the Jewish leadership had hired a top attorney, Tertullus. **Acts 24:1-4**

Satan had labeled the followers of Jesus as a sect. Some 1,900 years later Satan is still using the same name against true believers in Christ. **verse 5**

As a typical crooked lawyer, Tertullus blamed the captain of the Roman garrison in Jerusalem for having done violence to the Jews while he saved Paul's life. **verses 6-9**

Paul was given a chance by Felix to speak in his own defense. It is noteworthy that Paul didn't launch into a personal attack on the Jews from Jerusalem confront Felix of being an adulterer. Instead, he referred to the fact that Felix had



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been a Roman judge for many years in Judea and how Paul was looking forward to defending himself in front of Felix. **verse 10**

Jesus had prophesied there would be times when believers were going to be dragged into courts and what they were to say and the manner to say it would be given to them at that moment. **Matthew 10:16-20**

PAUL LAID OUT HIS DEFENSE

Paul began by telling Felix it was only 12 days since his arrest in Jerusalem and that Tertullus' accusations never took place. **Acts 24:11-13**

He boldly confessed that he was a follower of Jesus Christ and did not back down from this position. **verses 14-16**

He shared events from his perspective and admitted that he had performed sacrifices in the temple. **verses 17-18**

He then turned the table on his accusers by stating that the people present at the temple were not in the court room and that they should be present so Felix could hear from them what actually happened. **verse 19**

He then challenged Tertullus and his handlers to produce evidence of any wrong doing. **verses 20-21**

THE RESPONSE FROM FELIX

Felix was well informed about the new Messianic movement in Judaism and how the leadership of the Jews had rejected it. He was aware that many people had been healed of all kinds of infirmities and that the followers believed that their Messiah, Jesus, had been resurrected and ascended into heaven. Felix called a break in the trial and informed the Jews from Jerusalem that nothing would happen until captain Lysias attended the court hearing. **verse 22**

As a judge, Felix ruled that Paul should be kept imprisoned but that he would be allowed visitors and supplies from them. Jail food in those days was not very good and prisoners with outside connections lived a better life and ate better than the poor prisoners. **verse 23**

FELIX WAS NOT IMMUNE TO THE GOSPEL

Felix was a sinner with a conscience just like everyone else. **Romans 2:14-15**

Felix and Drusilla then wanted a private audience with Paul to hear more about Jesus. The Gospel cut deep into his heart, but instead of repenting from his sins, he sent Paul away. **Acts 24:24**

Even though Felix was under conviction over his sins, he couldn't leave money alone because he knew that Paul was a major leader in the Christian movement and hoped his followers were willing to collect money for his release. This continued for the next two years until Felix was recalled to Rome and Porcius Festus took over as the new governor. **verses 26-27**

The court proceedings under the rule of Felix came to a draw as the Jewish leadership was not able to get their hands on Paul nor was he able to gain his freedom.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS?

1. Historical records tell us that Felix was a corrupt man, a thief, an adulterer, a murderer, and a man with no morals. But Jesus had died for this man and Paul did all he could to bring this man to a saving knowledge in Christ. Thus, we should never give up on any person, regardless of how vile they seem to be. **1 Timothy 2:1-7**
2. Unsaved human political leaders have always been corrupt; the same holds true for today and will be the same in the future.

The believer in Christ is not asked to submit to laws or regulations which are in violation of God's law. **Acts 4:18-21**

But the believer in Christ is asked to live as peaceable as possible and try to win the "bad and the ugly" for the Lord. **1 Peter 2:11-20**

3. There is no reason to fear or to panic if we are dragged into court because of our faith in Jesus Christ. Lean on the Holy Spirit! **John 16:12-15**

Remember, there is never a crisis in heaven at any time. God is in total control and has full knowledge in advance of what is going to happen on the earth and in the creation. God is never surprised and has a solution to every problem a believer in Christ will encounter on this earth. Our job is to be obedient and line up with God!

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

DO YOU HAVE AN EAR TO HEAR WITH?