

Paul's Trial Before Felix, Part 2: Paul's Defense Begun

Scripture: Acts 24:10–16

Code: 1792

INTRODUCTION

A. The Testimony of Postponement

1. By Felix

Acts 24:24-25 gives a graphic illustration of the tragedy of postponing a decision about Christ: "After certain days, when Felix came with his wife, Drusilla, who was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." But there never was a convenient season for Felix.

2. By the Athenians

Paul spoke to the Athenians about Christ on the Areopagus, which was the highest court of Athens. Acts 17:32 says, "When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." As far as we know, they never did.

3. By some potential disciples

Jesus gave us a series of comments on discipleship in Luke 9. Three would-be disciples appeared on the scene, but none of them followed the Lord. All of them failed the requirements.

a) Excuse #1 Verse 57 says, "It came to pass that, as they went on the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee wherever thou goest." That sounds good. He didn't even put any conditions on his following Him. But verse 58 says, "Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Why did Jesus say that? The implication is that the man had a materialistic motive. He undoubtedly realized, or at least hoped, that Jesus was the Messiah. He had the same problem Judas did—he wanted to follow Jesus from the standpoint of ambition. That's why Jesus told him he wouldn't be as well off as foxes or birds because He didn't have worldly goods. The man never followed. He disqualified himself because of his materialistic motive. b) Excuse #2 Verse 59 says, "He said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." But the man's father wasn't even dead yet. He was saying, "I'll follow you as soon as I collect my inheritance." That implied a lack of faith on his part. He didn't want to preach about the kingdom without any money to support himself. He didn't believe God could supply his needs. Verse 60 says, "Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead [let the spiritual dead take care of the physical dead]; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Our Lord promises that if you seek the kingdom of God, all the things you need will be given to you (Matt. 6:33). This man had a materialistic motive combined with a lack of faith. c) Excuse #3 Verse 61 says, "And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, who are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." That's procrastination. A man who postpones isn't fit for the kingdom. There are a lot of people who do just that. They say, "Someday I'll give my life to Christ and serve Him, but not now." That's a dangerous attitude because they are gambling with their lives.

B. The Tragedy of Postponement

Careless people postpone for two reasons:

1. Hardened by constant rejection

The more a person resists Christ, the harder he becomes and the easier it is to resist the next time. Man is a creature of habit.

a) Hebrews 3:7-15 Here is great proof of the inspiration of the Old Testament. The writer is quoting the Old Testament, yet he attributes the quote to the Holy Spirit: "Wherefore, as the Holy Spirit saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of trial in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore, I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart, and they have not known my ways. So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest" (vv. 7-11). God didn't want the Jews who were close to making a decision for Christ to be like the nation Israel. They kept hardening their hearts in the wilderness until they were prohibited from entering into the Promised Land. An entire generation died in the wilderness. Why? Because they hardened their hearts against God and forfeited rest in the Promised Land. I believe the Promised Land represented salvation to the writer of Hebrews. The nation forfeited salvation. The point of Hebrews 3:7-11 is not to do what they did. The writer of Hebrews continues his instruction for the Jewish brethren, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (vv. 12-13). The more you reject and the longer you put off a decision, the harder your heart becomes. Sin will deceive you into rationalizing a postponement. Verse 15 says, "While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." b) Luke 13:23-25 In verse 24 Jesus said, "Strive to enter in at the narrow gate [the way of salvation]; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Verse 23 indicates that few will be saved. I don't know how people can believe the doctrine of universalism and reconcile it with verses 23-24. Verse 25 says, "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut the door, and ye begin to stand outside, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not from where ye are." There are many people who were planning on making it into heaven, but it will be too late for them--the door will be shut. They are like the people who lived in Noah's day--the door of the ark eventually was closed to them. Postponement is foolish because a person's heart can become hard.

2. Abandoned by God

After a certain time, God stops calling. In the days before Noah, God said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6:3). Only a fool postpones salvation when his soul is at stake. He's a bigger fool than the man who put his fortune in a diamond and then accidentally drops it into the ocean.

REVIEW

Felix was a fool. During his tenure as procurator of Judea from A.D. 52 to 60, it was his lot to deal with Paul the apostle, even as a previous procurator by the name of Pontius Pilate had to deal with Jesus Christ. In Acts 24 Paul and Felix confront each other in a hearing. There are three ways to look at this passage: from the viewpoint of Paul and the record of what happens to him, from the viewpoint of God and how He works in the situation, or from the viewpoint of Felix and the tragedy that occurs in his life. So far we've been looking at it from Paul's viewpoint.

The Jewish leaders wanted to kill Paul because he represented a serious threat--the same threat Jesus had represented. He was winning a great following of Jews to Christ. The Jewish leaders feared that they would lose their authority in the eyes of the people. Anyone who won a great following was a threat to their position. So they tried to get rid of Paul. They tried to kill him two different times in riots (Acts 21:27- 32; 23:10) and once in an ambush (Acts 23:15). After those attempts the Romans finally decided to get Paul out of Jerusalem for two reasons: One, Paul was a Roman citizen so they had to protect him; and two, he had committed no crime. The Romans took Paul to Caesarea to the home of the governor and held him in protective custody. The Jewish accusers were then sent for to bring their case before Felix at Caesarea. Paul would receive a much

fairer trial than ever would have been possible in Jerusalem. So the accusers went to Caesarea to get Paul executed for the crimes they accused him of. The trial has three parts: the prosecution, the defense, and the verdict.

I. THE PROSECUTION (vv. 1-9)

A. The Accusers (vv. 1-4)

B. The Accusations (vv. 5-9)

1. False charges (vv. 5-6b)

a) Sedition (v. 5a)b) Sectarianism (v. 5b)c) Sacrilege (v. 6a)

2. False testimony (vv. 6b-9)

All the accusations brought against Paul were lies. But that's to be expected. If you live a godly life in the face of an ungodly world, you are going to suffer (2 Tim. 3:12). Paul suffered false accusations, but he could say he was blameless. God wants Christians to be called before the tribunal of the world for their faith. And He wants the verdict to be not guilty so that the persecution is for the sake of righteousness. If you're going to receive persecution, it ought to be the result of your holiness, not your unrighteousness.

LESSON

II. THE DEFENSE (vv. 10-21)

Paul defends himself calmly, courteously, and categorically against the charges.

A. Recognizing the Assistance (v. 10)

1. A divine lawyer (v. 10a)

"Then Paul, after the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered"

Paul didn't have a lawyer like Tertullus, who knew about Roman law and Roman courts. He had someone better than a human lawyer. When Jesus left the earth, He told His disciples that He would send them another Comforter (John 14:16). The Greek word for "comforter" is parakletos. It comes from the words para and kaleo. It means "one called alongside." It could be translated "a lawyer for the defense." Paul didn't have a human lawyer, but he had the divine lawyer handling his case. Every word Paul said to Felix was the word of the Holy Spirit--every word was inspired. Paul was doing the talking, but through the energy of the Holy Spirit.

2. A competent judge (v. 10b)

"Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself."

Paul knew that Felix had been around long enough to judge fairly in his case, so he was anxious to answer the charges against him. Some people accuse Paul of flattery in verse 10. He didn't flatter Felix; he was just glad to have his case judged fairly. Felix had been governor in that area for five years. Prior to that, he had served under Cumanus, the governor of Samaria, for four years. So Felix had been acquainted with Jewish affairs for nine years. Any judgment rendered in regard to Jewish affairs required a prior knowledge of Jewish custom. And that custom was so unique, a man would have had to live within the culture to adequately evaluate the cultural tensions. In effect Paul is saying, "Felix, I know you've been around long enough to know that this is a theological problem. Because you know that, I'm glad to give my defense."

Is flattery acceptable for a Christian?

Flattery is unacceptable for a Christian at all times. When you flatter someone, you do or say something that is beyond the truth to elicit something for yourself. People don't flatter those who can't give them anything; they flatter only those who can. All the things Tertullus said about Felix obviously were not true. Tertullus knew it, Felix knew it, everyone knew it. Flattery is a very common approach people use to get what they want. And sad to say, it works. But it is absolutely unacceptable for the

Christian. Why? Because Proverbs 26:28 says, "A flattering mouth worketh ruin." Psalm 12:3 says, "The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips."

What's wrong with flattery? It is not the truth. Flattery is a calculated misrepresentation to gain something for yourself. It is masked self-indulgence and selfishness--it is sin. And it is a temptation. Many people think that if you want to get anything in life, you have to get it any way you can. There are people who would say that if the church needs to build a new building, you need to flatter a person who has a lot of money. If you use that approach, you'll be waiting a long time for it. I don't want money if I have to flatter someone for it. It should be fairly obvious from the way I preach that I don't want money from you; I want you to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. I try not to be too rough in my preaching; I do try to lovingly admonish you. But there's no place for flattery, even though it goes on all the time in Christian circles.

Paul was not flattering Felix. But he did know that Felix had been around long enough to make a proper judgment. For that reason he cheerfully could go ahead with his defense. I would say that there is some reverse psychology in that because it put Felix on the spot. Paul always seemed able to gain the upper hand on his opponents. Felix was pressured not only by the case, but also by the fact that Paul knew he had the ability to make a responsible judgment.

B. Responding to the Accusations (vv. 11-21)

1. Sedition (vv. 11-13)

The Jewish leaders claimed Paul was a political criminal.

a) No time (v. 11)"Because thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship." Paul had been in the area only for twelve days, and he spent five of them in Caesarea (Acts 24:1). The maximum time he had spent in Jerusalem was seven days. Paul is saying, "I haven't had time to start a riot." Acts 21 tells us what he was doing during those seven days.(1) The period of the vowWhen Paul arrived in Jerusalem, the Jewish Christians were concerned about Paul because they had heard he had become anti-Semitic--that he was opposed to the customs and traditions of the Jews. But Paul told them that wasn't so. The elders of the church in Jerusalem asked him to prove it by taking a Nazirite vow with four brethren. A Nazirite vow was simply an outward expression of consecration. It was a Jewish custom. Paul agreed to their request to prove he wasn't opposed to the Jewish customs. Verses 26-27 say, "Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification.... And when the seven days were almost ended." Paul spent most of the seven days in the Temple carrying out a vow and five days in Caesarea. But the Jewish leaders accused him of starting a riot. He had been in the area for only those twelve days; there was no time to initiate any kind of a rebellion.(2) The purpose of the vowIn verse 11 Paul says, "I went up to Jerusalem to worship." He didn't go to desecrate the Temple or to start a riot, but to worship. The Nazirite vow, which signified consecration, was that act of worship.b) No riot (v. 12)"And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people [collecting a crowd], neither in the synagogues, nor in the city."(1) Additional defenses(a) Acts 25:8--This was the defense Paul gave before Festus, the governor who succeeded Felix: "Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended in anything at all."(b) Acts 28:17--When Paul arrived in Rome, "it came to pass that, after three days, Paul called the chief of the Jews together; and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner." Paul had never done anything wrong. And he wasn't lying because he said he could stand before God with a clear conscience (Acts 24:16).(2) Avoided dialogueWhat did Paul deny? He said he had not been disputing in the Temple. The Greek word translated "disputing" refers to reasoning or arguing. Paul disputed in every place he traveled except Jerusalem. The Lord protected him. He did not engage in any public dialogue in the Temple. Why didn't he?(a) Relieved of the responsibilityPaul

was sensitive to the religious situation in Jerusalem--he knew it was like a powder keg. He also had been relieved of the responsibility of evangelism there, so he felt no great burden to evangelize, although I'm sure his heart was broken over Israel. He said that he had not been raising up the people (Acts 24:12). The book of Acts often records that Paul reasoned out of the Scriptures in many of the cities he visited. Wherever he went, people would gather and he would preach. But when he arrived in Jerusalem, it was time for him to pacify the Jewish Christians.(b) Revealed by the LordWhy would Paul not feel responsible? Why would he back away from a volatile situation? Was he afraid? No, fear was never his motive. In Acts 22:17 Paul said, "It came to pass that, when I was come again to Jerusalem [at an earlier time], even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance." While Paul was at another level of consciousness, God communicated to him. Acts 22:18-20 records these words of the Lord to Paul: "Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue those that believed on thee; and when the blood of thy martyr, Stephen, was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him." In other words, "Jerusalem would be a great place for me to preach, Lord. They would see the transformation that has taken place in me." But verse 21 says, "And he said unto me, Depart; for I will send thee far from here unto the Gentiles." The Lord Jesus Christ by direct revelation told Paul that he was not responsible for the ministry in Jerusalem. Paul's only goal in going to Jerusalem was to fellowship with Christians. He went to the Temple to carry out a vow so the Jewish Christians would not think he was anti- Semitic. He had no goal of propagating the gospel. His defenses didn't involve a specific proclamation of the gospel, although his earlier defense before the mob (Acts 22:1-21) certainly implied the truth of it. Neither did he specifically preach the gospel to the Sanhedrin. The Lord did not want him to have that particular ministry in Jerusalem. For one thing, there were already thousands of Jewish Christians there, so evangelism in Jerusalem was primarily a one-to-one encounter. People were being won to Christ. That's why Paul did not sense the drive for confrontation that he did in other places. Paul had not raised up a crowd anywhere in Jerusalem--not in the Temple or the city.c) No proof (v. 13)"Neither can they prove the things of which they now accuse me."If you don't have any proof, you don't have a case. It should have been thrown out of court for that reason alone. The Jewish authorities couldn't prove anything. Paul denied the charges--he had done nothing treasonous.

2. Sectarianism (vv. 14-16)

The Jewish leaders claimed Paul was a heretic. Paul couldn't deny his Christianity, but he also had to make sure he denied their charge. So he said that he was not a heretic while at the same time he claimed to be a Christian. There was only one way he could do that: show that all his accusers were heretics.

The Way

In Acts 24:14 Paul says, "This I confess unto thee that, after the way." "The Way" was a title for Christianity. Unsaved people would slur Christians by calling them Nazarenes or Christians--little Christs. But the Christians called themselves, "The Way." Where did that name come from? Jesus said, "I am the way" (John 14:6). Peter preached, "There is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). In 2 Peter 2:2 he said, "Many shall follow their [false teachers] pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

a) Paul's clear confession (vv. 14-15)"But this I confess unto thee that, after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets; and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."(1) The conflictThe topic of the resurrection would have immediately caused internal conflict with the Jewish leaders because the Sadducees

didn't believe in the resurrection, whereas the Pharisees did. That's what started the fight in the Sanhedrin in Acts 23:7. Who were the real heretics? The high priests. They had ceased worshipping God because the only way to Him is through Christ. Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). They had ceased believing in the law and the prophets. If they still had believed, they would have had to believe in Christ because the main topic of the law and the prophets is Christ. They had also ceased believing in the great hope of Israel--the resurrection. That's a strong argument. The Jewish leaders charged Paul with being a religious heretic who belonged to a subversive offshoot of Judaism. Paul denied it, while at the same time he affirmed that he was a Christian. He told them that Christianity was true Judaism. They were the heretics because they didn't worship the true God, believe the Scriptures, or believe in the resurrection. Paul didn't attempt to explain any further because Felix understood the conflict between Christians and Jews. Acts 24:22 says that Felix had a "more perfect knowledge of that way," and Paul knew that he did. Felix had served in the area for nine years. Christians were everywhere. The city of Caesarea had many Christian residents, the most vocal of whom was Philip the evangelist. (2) The convictions (a) Worship of God Paul said, "So worship I the God of my fathers" (Acts 24:14). That was an historic title for the God of Israel. Paul still worshiped the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He had not forsaken Him. That's a great truth for a Jewish Christian to make public. I think many people believe that when a Jewish person becomes a Christian he ceases to worship the God of Israel. But he is known only through His Son. If you aren't Jewish, you might remind your family and friends that you worship the God of Israel. When one becomes a Christian, he does not forsake the God of Israel; he actually comes to Him the only way he can--through Christ. Paul was a completed Jew. That's not a popular term today, but it's a good one. The only way a Jewish person can become all that he should be is to be made complete in Christ. In Romans 2:28-29 Paul said, "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart." The only true Jews in the world are Christian Jews. A true Jew is one who continues to worship and obey the true God because he came to Him through the Messiah--Jesus Christ. In 1 Corinthians 16:22 Paul said, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema [accursed]." In Romans 9:6 Paul said, "They are not all Israel, who are of Israel." As Paul stood before Felix, he was saying that he was the only true Jew in the trial because he had come to the Messiah. (b) Belief in the Law and the Prophets (i) Paul's implication Paul also said he believed "all things which are written in the law and in the prophets" (Acts 24:14). Do you think Paul believed the Old Testament was inspired? He believed every bit of it! But most importantly, Paul was implying that the Jewish leaders didn't, and he was right. If they had believed the law and the prophets, they would have had to believe in Christ. Today, most Jewish people have rejected Christ. That means they also have rejected the Old Testament. That's why many of them don't believe in the literal truth of the Old Testament, even though they still hold to the Judaistic ethic. But you cannot study the Old Testament very long and believe it without coming to Jesus Christ, unless you're like the ultraconservatives who are concerned only about the minutiae of the law. Most Jewish people don't even believe in a Messiah anymore; they just believe in a Messianic era.

To Deny Jesus Is to Deny the Old Testament

To deny Jesus as the Messiah is to deny the Old Testament. In John 5:39 Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." On the road to Emmaus, Jesus opened up the Old Testament, and "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). You can't study the Old Testament with an open mind and not come to Jesus Christ. To deny Jesus, a Jew must deny his own Scriptures. To come to Jesus is to be complete in all that Judaism is. So Paul was saying to Felix, "I'm not a heretic. I've consummated my faith by turning to my

Messiah."

It is tragic to find Jewish people all over the world who reject Jesus Christ as Messiah. By continuing to reject Him as their Messiah, they will eventually give up the idea of a Messiah. There is no one on the scene who even remotely looks like a possibility. When they don't believe He will come, they say the Messiah was an era, not a person, or they deny the possibility of a Messiah altogether. There are a few orthodox Jews who adhere to the letter of the law, but who don't see Jesus as the Messiah in it.

The Saddest People

Gentile believers are better off than Jewish unbelievers. Although I have not been born into the stock of Israel and known the blessings that come as a result, I'm better off as a Gentile Christian than an unbelieving Jew. The Bible indicates that the saddest person is an unbelieving Jew who has forfeited the truth that he had (Heb. 10:29). As a Christian who has accepted the truth, I worship the God of Israel. I believe all that the God of Israel ever said. And I believe in the Messiah of Israel for my salvation. I'm every bit a Jew in terms of all that I believe, if not in my nationality. I thank God that He chose to graft Gentiles into His tree (Rom. 11:17). The unbelieving branch was cut off because of its unbelief and God grafted the Gentiles in. But don't be smug because the Bible also says that a time is coming when Israel will be grafted back in (Rom. 11:23-24). There will be a time when all Israel is saved (Rom. 11:26).

ii) Paul's identification Paul was the only true Jew in court while his accusers were heretics. But Paul didn't gloat over that. I imagine even as he thought about them, his heart was in pain. He loved those people. I don't believe the world can understand his love because it interprets love in such a small way. In Romans 9:1-3 Paul said, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also beareth me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Paul cared. In Romans 10:1 he said, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." He didn't gloat over Israel's loss; it hurt him deeply.(c) Hope of the resurrection According to Acts 24:15, Paul had "hope toward God." What hope? The hope of the resurrection. The traditional hope of the Jew was the resurrection. Did the Old Testament teach a resurrection? Yes, in Isaiah 26:19, Job 19:26, Daniel 12:2, and elsewhere. Abraham believed in a resurrection; that's why he was willing to sacrifice Isaac (Heb. 11:17-19). That was ultimate faith. The Sadducees who accused Paul didn't believe in a resurrection. You might ask, "How could they avoid the teaching of the resurrection if it is in Isaiah, Job, and Daniel?" They believed that the only binding truth in the Old Testament was what Moses said (the first five books of the Old Testament). When Jesus was engaged in an argument about the resurrection with the Sadducees, He quoted Exodus 3:6 because He knew they would have to acknowledge that Scripture (Matt. 22:32). Jesus knew that the name of the living God-- the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob--indicated the reality of the resurrection. The Sadducees were not traditional; they were heretics. They denied what the Old Testament taught. I'm sure that the majority of Paul's accusers were Sadducees. The high priest was a Sadducee, as probably were the elders who accused Paul. So Paul was telling Felix that he was the only one present who believed in the resurrection of the dead, of both the just and the unjust.b) Paul's clear conscience (v. 16)"In this do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men."As a true Jew--as one who believed in God, in His word, and in the hope of the resurrection--Paul wanted to live a pure life. The ultimate end of any man's testimony is to be able to say, "My desire in life is never to offend God or man." The epitome of life is to never have your conscience accuse you. Paul lived his life in accord with the standards of God. As a result, he had a clear conscience. He believed in the great truths of verses 14-15, and built his life on them. Do you know that you believe only what you act on? If you don't build your life on the

principles of God, then you don't really believe them. Paul believed them and lived by them; therefore he stood blameless. Paul tried to live a life consistent with what he believed. You ought to live a life that fits the Word of God. And you will if you truly believe it. Paul said, "I'm innocent. Just check out my life." Can you stand before the world blameless, void of offense? That's the ultimate testimony.

Focusing on the Facts

1. How did the potential follower of Jesus disqualify himself in Luke 9:57-58?
2. How did the second potential follower of Jesus disqualify himself (Luke 9:59-60)?
3. Why do people postpone their opportunity for salvation?
4. Why did an entire generation of the nation of Israel forfeit their rest in the Promised Land (Heb. 3:7-11)?
5. Who was Paul's lawyer?
6. Explain why Paul was glad to be able to give his defense before Felix (Acts 24:10)?
7. Is flattery acceptable for a Christian? Explain.
8. Explain why Paul didn't have time to start a riot in Jerusalem (Acts 24:11).
9. Why did Paul take the Nazirite vow with four Jewish brethren (Acts 21:23-26)?
10. Why did Paul avoid engaging in dialogue with fellow Jews in the Temple? Explain.
11. What was Paul's goal in going to Jerusalem in Acts 21?
12. What did the title "The Way" refer to? Explain its origin.
13. Paul was accused of being a heretic, but who were the real heretics? Why were they heretics?
14. According to Romans 2:28-29, who is a true Jew?
15. When Paul said he believed "all things which are written in the law and in the prophets," what was he implying about the Jewish leaders (Acts 24:14)?
16. What does a Jewish person have to deny if he denies Jesus is the Messiah (John 5:39)?
17. How did the Sadducees explain away the resurrection as recorded in Isaiah, Job, and Daniel? How did Jesus respond to their argument (Matt. 23:32)?
18. Why did Paul have a clear conscience?

Pondering the Principles

1. Flattery is not acceptable for a Christian. But we all are human and fall into that worldly practice at some time. Examine your attitude toward flattery. Isolate those times when you have used flattery to gain your own end. Do you find that those occasions are frequent or infrequent? Have you flattered someone recently? Take this time to confess to God those occasions and repent of them. Memorize Ephesians 4:25: "Laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another" (NASB).
2. According to Acts 24:14-15, the apostle Paul was convinced of three things: He worshiped God, believed in the Law and the prophets, and hoped in the resurrection. On a scale of 1-10, evaluate your conviction of those three aspects of your Christian life. How much does your life reflect your commitment to worship God? How can the world tell that you have a deep commitment to God's Word? How do people know that you hope to be resurrected with Christ one day? Paul believed in and was committed to those great truths. As a result, he had a clear conscience before the world. You need to be building your life on those principles. Begin today to live your life with the ultimate goal of having a clear conscience before God.

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