

The Apostle Paul's Defence Before:

Felix Festus Agrippa II

PETER Denied Christ	PAUL Persecuted Christ's
Healed a lame man. Chapter 3	Healed a lame man Chapter 14
Simon the sorcerer Chapter 8	Elymas the sorcerer Chapter 13
People healed by Peters shadow. Chapter 5	People healed by Pauls handkerchief. Chapter 19
Laying on of hands. Chapter 8	Laying on of hands. Chapter 19

PETER Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria	PAUL The uttermost parts of the earth
Peter worshipped. Chapter 10	Paul worshipped Chapter 14
Tabitha raised Chapter 9	Eutychas raised Chapter 20
Peter imprisoned. Chapter 9	Paul imprisoned Chapter 14
Peters speech at Pentecost – all nations	Pauls speech at Pentecost – all nations

The Status of Jews under Roman Rule.

Roman Citizenship.

'The ultimate inadequacy of Roman concern for non Roman victims was indirectly the result of recurrent failure to protect the innocent and convict the guilty'

Providing the people paid their taxes and showed no outward sign of rebellion, protestings, rioting or strife, the Roman authorities preferred to turn a blind eye to the offences of the people over whom they had charge.

Criteria for Roman Citizenship
Born to parents who were both Roman citizens
Bestowed by Caesar for great deeds of bravery or loyalty to Rome.
Given to some soldiers with outstanding records after 25 years service in the Roman army.
Enormous cost paid by rich patrons for people who have done them a great service / favour.
Purchased by people who had been financially successful at an exorbitant cost.
Obtained by bribing officials with large sums of money

Pauls Unique Status
Roman citizen – a privileged status demanding respect
Formal Greek education. Paul spoke Greek and quoted Greek poets. Could converse with Greek philosophers
A Hebrew with an impeccable Jewish pedigree.
A MAN WHO COULD BE ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN

Advantages of Roman Citizenship
Attend the games, the arenas, the baths and public performances throughout the Empire
Exemption from some taxes. (Land taxes and paying standard tributes to Rome)
Full protection under Roman law in inheritances, adoption, legal contracts and marriage
Full protection under Roman law in law suits. Citizens must not be beaten, tortured or executed with a Roman trial.
The right to appeal to the high court of Rome if they were not satisfied with the legal process they had experienced.
Investigations must be made into the murder of a Roman citizen.

The Unfortunate Characters
Claudius Lysias. Captain of a Roman garrison.
Ananias – the High Priest of Israel ???
Antonius Felix. Proconsular of Judea. App. AD 58
Drusilla. 'Wife' of Felix. Related to the Herods
Tertullus. Orator and legal counsel for the Jews
Porcius Festus. Proconsular of Judea. App 60
King Agrippa II. Grandson of Herod the great
Bernice. Sister of Drusilla and Agrippa.

The opposing forces of the Roman governors in ruling justly
Duty to adhere to Roman law under threat of punishment or recall.
Personal gain of power and wealth that their opulent lifestyles and ego demanded.
Jewish privilege that allowed the Jews a voice in Rome that could influence or undermine their positions.

<u>Pentecost 27 years earlier (at the temple).</u>
Everyone heard people speak in their own languages.
A demonstration the Gospel was for all nations.
Paul attacked in the temple when he tells the Jews he was given the mandate by God to preach the Gospel to all nations.

PAUL - TO ANANIAS.

'God shall strike you,
whitened wall !
For do you sit judging me
according to the Law,
and against the Law command me
to be stricken '.

PAUL IS TAKEN TO
CAESAREA AT NIGHT
UNDER HEAVY
ESCORT TO STAND
TRIAL BEFORE FELIX.

Paul was NEVER on trial.

His judges &
accusers were on trial.

Paul was safer in prison,
protected by the 'enemy'
of Israel that his own
brethren - the children of
Abraham.

God can use the most
unlikely means to care for
this people.
'Enemies can be your
protectors'

Respect the rulers of the
land as people
appointed by God.

Don't give up when the going gets tough.
We are not promised a smooth ride, only a safe landing.

Be content and make the most of whatever state you find yourself in.

Be all things to all men that some may be saved.

Remember the hope of the world lies in the hope of Israel as foretold in the law and the prophets.

Remember the hope of the world lies in the hope of Israel as foretold in the law and the prophets.

The bible is a book about the Jewish people and the hope of salvation.

The Jews find it hard
to accept that the
Gospel is for all
nations.

The Gentiles find it
hard to accept that
their salvation lies in
a Jewish hope.

The Law and the
Prophets.
Hope and salvation
for all the world.

THE LEADING CHARACTERS

ACTS 21 – 25

*Claudius Lysias. The Sanhedrin. Ananias the high priest
Antonio Felix. Drusilla. Tertullus. Porcius Festus. Agrippa II. Berenice*

Pauls last recorded appeal
Of the Gospel message in Acts

‘I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made to our fathers by God’

Dates indicating the period these characters played their parts have been taken from Connybear and Howson.

However it should be noted that there is often 2-3 year discrepancies by various other commentators.



CLAUDIUS LYSIAS Acts 21, 22

The Roman tribune in charge of the Roman garrison, responsible for keeping order in the temple at the time of Paul's visit at Pentecost in AD 58.

A tribune could have up to 1000 people under his command and this authority is displayed when he organises a massive body guard of soldiers to protect

Paul on his way to Caesarea.

The man was probably a Greek who had gained his Roman citizenship during the reign of Claudius, thus his Roman name is Claudius and his Greek name Lysias.

His citizenship had cost him an enormous amount of money and he knew that in the hierarchy of Roman citizenship, a freeborn person had higher status. Claudius Lysias realises he has committed a serious error in publicly announcing he would lash a Roman citizen.

He therefore goes to great lengths to protect Paul and **himself** in the journey to Caesarea, indicating in his letter to Felix that **he** was the one responsible for rescuing Paul because he was a Roman citizenship.

Acts 23: 26-28 *'This Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix, greetings. This man was taken by the Jews and would have been killed by them. Then I came with an army and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. And being minded to know the charge for which they accused him, I brought him down to their Sanhedrin; whom I found be accused of questions of their law, and having no charge worthy of death or of bonds. And it being revealed to me that a plot against the man was about to be executed by the Jews, I immediately sent him to you, commanding his accusers also to say before you what they had against him. Farewell'.*

Though never sure of what Paul is supposed to be guilty of, he sees Paul as the cause of the riot which he is duty bound to subdue. Nevertheless he is the person by which Paul is saved from his brethren whose intent it was to kill him.

THE SANHEDRIN. Acts 22: 23



Judas before the Sanhedrin by Alexandre Bida

The Sanhedrin was the ruling council that had great authority under Roman rule and whose job it was to oversee all things pertaining to the Jewish religion. The council consisted of 71 members of which the high priest was the head. It comprised of two main groups of people, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees were the minority of the two.

There was a great deal of antagonism and opposing doctrines between these two groups. Some of their differences are listed below.

Pharisees	Sadducees
Respected by the common people	Respected by the elite ruling class
Believed in rabbinical interpretation of the Torah	Recognised only the written word of the Torah
Popular and democratic	Conservative, aristocratic and monarchists and mostly descendents of priests and high priests.
Purity laws applied everywhere	Purity laws applied on in the temple
Interpreted the Torah liberally	Interpreted the Torah literally
Believed in free will but that God had foreknowledge of the future	Believed in free will
Believed in literal resurrection and the Messianic age	Did not believe in resurrection or Messianic age.
Believed in angels and afterlife	Did not believe in angels or afterlife.
Generally thought to be more expert in the scriptures.	More concerned with policy than religion and pro Roman when it suited them.

ANANIAS – HIGH PRIEST ?



(Expositor Bible Commentary)

The case failed owing to the intervention of Agrippa II and he was returned to Jerusalem but not to office of high priest.

During the reign of Felix, Jonathon became high priest in his stead.(AD 52-56) Josephus tell us: ***“Felix bore an ill-will to Jonathan, the high priest, because he frequently gave him admonitions about governing the Jewish affairs better than he did, lest complaints should be made against him, since he had procured of Caesar the appointment of Felix as procurator of Judea. Accordingly, Felix contrived a method by which he might get rid of Jonathan, whose admonitions had become troublesome to him. Felix persuaded one of Jonathan's most faithful friends, of the name Doras, to bring the robbers upon him, and to put him to death.”***

This murder took place in the temple and the office of high priest then became vacant until King Agrippa appointed Ismael as high priest. It was during this vacant period that the events of Acts appear to take place and Ananias, the last living high priest, was standing in and executing the duties of high priest until the proper appointment was made...

It is probably why Paul quips to Ananias in Acts,

*‘God shall strike you, **whitened wall!** For do you sit judging me according to the Law, and against law command me to be stricken? And they who stood by him said, do you revile God's high priest? Then Paul said, **I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest;** for it is written, “You shall not speak evil of the ruler of your people.” (Act 23:3-5)*

TERTULLUS . Acts 24

Lawyer and professional orator employed by the Jews to state their case against Paul before Felix. (Name is of Roman origin although not conclusive of nationality). The trial was probably conducted in Latin. Note the charges all of which Felix, as governor, was pledged to uphold.



- 1) ***Paul was causing a disturbance against the Roman government.***
- 2) ***Paul was accused of being a ringleader of the Nazarenes (never used in the plural until this incident) and this disturbed the exercise of the Jewish religion, which under Roman law was guaranteed. Paul was also accused of introducing a new god, prohibited by Roman law***
- 3) ***Paul was accused of profaning the temple, a crime which the Jews were legally entitled to punish.***

Consequently, it was argued, because of all the above the noble Jews had been impelled to make a legal arrest in the name of peace in order to maintain order that was so imperative for Rome and if it had not been for the violent intervention of Claudius Lysias they would not be needing to waste the valuable time of the most noble Felix in trying a case they were willing and able to do. ie. **Sedition. Treason. Causing insurrection.**

Tertullus' words are clever but all insidious lies.

- Felix was **not** noble – he had killed their high priest (Jonathon) and was known for his cruelty. Even as Tertullus spoke there were Jews in Rome complaining about his governorship.
- Felix had **not** brought great peace – there had been insurrections and rebellions that he had dealt with harshly and which was why he was eventually recalled to Rome. (This is possibly a veiled threat by the Jews that if Felix wanted to be known as someone who kept the peace for Rome, he better convict Paul)
- The people did **not** enjoy a period of prosperity else why would Paul be taking relief donations to the Jerusalem meeting.



Marcus Antonius FELIX . Acts 23. 24

Roman Procurator. AD 52 – 58 (approximately)

'Marcus Antonius Felix was originally a slave from Cilicia, Paul's home province, but had gained his freedom thanks to his brother, Marcus Antonius Pallas, a freedman well favoured by Emperor

Claudius. As Felix' political fortunes rose, so did his reputation for corruption, cruelty and base lusts. According to the historian Tacitus, Felix ruled with **"the power of a king but the mind of a slave"**,

Felix's cruelty and licentiousness, coupled with his accessibility to bribes, led to a great increase of crime in Judaea.

The period of his rule was marked by internal feuds and disturbances, which he put down with severity. (see the irony of Tertullus words) **'Since we enjoy great quietness by you, and very worthy deeds are done to this nation due to your forethought, in everything and everywhere, most noble Felix, we accept with all thankfulness. (Act 24:3)**

Felix was eventually recalled to Rome, leaving Paul in prison, accused of using a dispute between the Jews and Syrians of Caesarea as a pretext to slay and plunder the inhabitants, but through the intercession of his brother, the freedman Pallas, who had great influence with the Emperor Nero, he escaped unpunished.

Felix married 3 times. His first wife was called Drusilla whom he divorced. He apparently fell in love with his 2nd wife, also named Drusilla (Jewess and daughter of Herod Agrippa the great) when she was the wife of another man. It is recorded Felix, a pagan, used magic and sorcery to persuade her to leave her husband and marry him.

See Pauls reference to immorality directed at Felix and Drusilla in Acts 24:24

'A few days later Felix and his wife, Drusilla, who was Jewish, sent for Paul and listened to him talk about a life of believing in Jesus Christ.



DRUSILLA (Wife ? of Felix) Acts 24

Drusilla was a Jewess, the daughter of King Herod Agrippa the great and sister to Berenice and King Agrippa II.

She had one brother, Agrippa II and two sisters, Berenice and Marianne. There was apparently a great deal of resentment between the Berenice and Drusilla mainly because Berenice was jealous of Drusilla renowned beauty.

At age 6 Drusilla was engaged to Ephianes, son to the king of Antioch, on the condition he adopted Judaism. This engagement was annulled by her brother when Epiphanes failed to keep this promise. In her teens Drusilla was married to Gaius Azizus and it was whilst married to him that Felix met her and was besotted with her beauty.

He spent a great deal of money organising magicians and sorcerers to persuade Drusilla to leave her husband and marry him which she eventually succumbed to.

Drusilla, who would have known the Jewish scriptures, shows a curiosity concerning the trial and appeal of Paul in that she attends the Judgement Hall with Felix. She would have been familiar with the principles expounded by Paul and that her 'marriage' to Felix was not morally legal but her response to Pauls appeal is not recorded.

Drusilla and her son by Felix were killed in Pompeii when Mount Vesuvius erupted in AD 79.

As Paul continued to insist on right relations with God and his people, about **a life of moral discipline and the coming Judgment**, Felix felt things getting a little too close for comfort and dismissed him. **"That's enough for today. I'll call you back when it's convenient."**

Paul was a 'hot potato' for Felix. Every way he turned Paul posed a problem for him that would not go away.

Porcius FESTUS Acts 25



Roman Procurator. AD 58 - 60 – (approximately)

Festus replaced Felix as governor of Judea and in so doing inherited 'Paul' as a major problem that needed resolution. Aware that Felix had failed to act properly according to Roman Law, he decides to make things right immediately. He was also probably keen to be on good terms with the people he was to govern (The

Jews) and was aware that the best way to keep his position was to keep in favour with them.

Within 3 days of arriving he travels to Jerusalem to hear from the Jews their charges against his prisoner.

The Jews wanted Paul returned to Jerusalem so they could murder him on route but Festus apparently sees through them and demands that everything be done according to Roman law. The accusers must come to Caesarea.

However during Paul's appeal, he realises this case was not one that demanded a Roman Magistrate and that it concerned the religion of the Jews. Festus appears to have some knowledge of Jewish customs. He tries to ingratiate himself to the Jews by asking Paul to go to Jerusalem to be judged by the Jews in his presence.

It was at this point that Paul realises he will never have a fair trial so he takes the matter out of the hands of both Jew and Gentile and announces,

'I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as you very well know'.

The hot potato just got hotter – how can you send a prisoner to Rome for trial without knowing what to charge him with ?

Festus died within 2 years whilst in office. If only he had heeded Paul's words 'most noble Festus; I speak forth the words of truth and soberness'. (Act 26:24-25)



King Agrippa II. Acts 26

The King Agrippa was Marcus Julius Agrippa II (A.D. 27-100), son of Agrippa I (Acts 12:1-25) and great-grandson of Herod the Great. He was brought up in Rome in the court of Claudius, he was a favourite of the emperor, though too young to immediately succeed his father at his death in A.D. 44.

Historian's record he was an indecisive man, timid and easily led. Therefore he was at the mercy of any of his counsellors and also his sister Berenice. He never married.

He would have been well acquainted with the Jewish religion and the events that occurred in Jerusalem during the ministry of Jesus Christ, whose birth had caused his grandfather so much concern he ordered the killing of all children under the age of 2 in Bethlehem.

Act 26:3 ' Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews':

In A.D. 50 he was granted the petty kingdom of Chalcis which he later exchanged for the tetrarchy of Philip, Abilene, Trachonitis and Acra .

In A.D. 56 Nero added to his kingdom the Galilean cities of Tarichea and Tiberias with their surrounding lands and some surrounding lands and villages. He had supreme power in Jewish religious life, for the Romans gave him the right to appoint the high priest and custodianship of the temple treasure and the high priest's vestments .

Prisoner Paul boldly proclaims the gospel before Festus, Agrippa and Bernice in the final missionary preaching recorded in Acts.

***'King Agrippa, believe you the prophets? I know that you believe'.
Then Agrippa said unto Paul, 'Almost thou persuade me to be a Christian'.***



BERENICE. Acts 26

Berenice, a Jewess, was also the granddaughter of King Herod Agrippa and sister to Agrippa II and Drusilla, wife of Felix of whom it is said she was extremely jealous.

Historians paint a picture of Berenice as a licentious and immoral woman. She had three failed marriages and it is insinuated by several historians including Josephus who had a close personal relationship with Agrippa II, that brother and sister were involved in an incestuous relationship.

Berenice had a more dominant personality than Agrippa and was more suited to public life. After three failed marriages she spent most of her time in the court of her brother, acting as queen consort loving the attention and regalia of her elevated position.

This is implied when it is noted that. **Act 25:23 'And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing'**

Commentators remark that the great pomp was overkill for the rather minor territory over which Agrippa II had control.

Historians tell us that Berenice eventually went on and married again, this time the future emperor, Titus Vespasianus but the marriage did not last owing to her infidelity.

Berenice would have had a solid background in the Jewish religion and should have had insight into Paul's appeal. History records she went on to engage in many affairs including one with Caesar.

Herod's Family Tree

Herod the Great

King of Palestine 37-4 BC (Luke 1:5) He built many cities and structures including the temple in Jerusalem. He killed the boy babies in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1-17)

Antipater Alexander Herod Aristobulus Herod Philip I

He married Herodias and fathered Salome (Matt. 14:3b; Mark 6:17)

Herod Antipas I

He ruled Galilee & Perea 4 BC-39 AD (Luke 3:1) He beheaded John the Baptist. Jesus called him a fox. He tried Jesus (Mark 6:14-29; Luke 13:31-32; 23:7-12) He married Herodias after Herod Philip I did (Mark 6:18)

Herod Philip II

He ruled Iturea & Trachonitis 4BC-34 AD (Luke 3:1) He married Salome.

Herod Agrippa I

He was king of Palestine 37-44 AD. He killed James, imprisoned Peter, and God smote him (Acts 12:1-11, 23)

Herod of Chalsis

He ruled 41-48 AD. He married Bernice

Herodius

She married Herod Philip I and then Herod Antipas. She asked for John the Baptist's head (Matt. 14:3; Mark 6:17)

Herod Agrippa II

He ruled Chalsis & the northern territory 50-70 AD. Paul addressed him and Bernice. (Acts 25:13-26:32)

Drusilla

She married Felix the ruler of Judea 52-59 AD who tried Paul (Acts 23:26-24:27)

Bernice

She married Herod of Chalsis. She heard Paul with Herod Agrippa II (Acts 25:13-26:32)

Salome

The daughter of Herodius & Herod Philip I. She danced before Herod Antipas (Mark 6:22). She married

Herod Philip II.

Herod Archelaus

He ruled Judea, Samaria, & Idumaea 4 BC-6 AD (Matt. 2:22)