

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THOSE WHOSE ONLY BONDS ARE EXTERNAL (Acts 24:1–27)

INTRODUCTION:

I. FALSELY ACCUSED BUT UNDISTURBED

¹ After five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders, with an attorney *named* Tertullus, and they brought charges to the governor against Paul. ² 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, ³ we acknowledge *this* in every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. ⁴ “But, that I may not weary you any further, I beg you to grant us, by your kindness, a brief hearing. ⁵ “For we have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. ⁶ “And he even tried to desecrate the temple; and then we arrested him. We wanted to judge him according to our own Law. ⁷ “But Lysias the commander came along, and with much violence took him out of our hands, ⁸ ordering his accusers to come before you. By examining him yourself concerning all these matters you will be able to ascertain the things of which we accuse him.” ⁹ The Jews also joined in the attack, asserting that these things were so

II. ON TRIAL BUT INNOCENT

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, ¹¹ since you can take note of the fact that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. ¹² “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. ¹³ “Nor can they prove to you *the charges* of which they now accuse me. ¹⁴ “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; ¹⁵ having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. ¹⁶ “In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience *both* before God and before men. ¹⁷ “Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings; ¹⁸ in which they found me *occupied* in the temple, having been purified, without *any* crowd or uproar. But *there were* some Jews from Asia— ¹⁹ who ought to have been present before you and to make accusation, if they should have anything against me. ²⁰ “Or else let these men themselves tell what misdeed they found when I stood before the Council, ²¹ 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.’ ”

III. IMPRISONED BUT FREE

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.” ²³ Then he gave orders to the centurion for him to be kept in custody and *yet* have *some* freedom, and not to prevent any of his friends from ministering to him. 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. 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.” ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ But after two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and wishing to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul imprisoned.

CONCLUSION: