



“The Resurrection on Trial!”

ACTS Chapter 23 – 24

> Chapter 23 - “The Trial!”

(v1-10) Paul and the kangaroo court.

(v1-5) The witness of a good conscience - What is the conscience? *The soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, condemning the other.*

- John MacArthur writes in his book *The Vanishing Conscience*, “Multitudes today respond to their conscience by attempting to suppress it, overrule it, or silence it. They conclude that the real blame for their wrong behavior lies in some childhood trauma, the way their parents raised them, societal pressures, or other causes beyond their control. Or they convince themselves that their sin is a clinical problem not a moral one and therefore define their alcoholism, sexual perversion, and other vices as “diseases”.”

- Bible commentator Richard Sibbes pictured the conscience as a court in the council of the human heart. In Sibbe’s imagery, the conscience itself assumes every role in the courtroom drama.

It is a register to record what we have done in exact detail (Jer. 17:1).

It is the accuser that lodges a complaint against us when we are guilty, and a defender to side with us in our innocence (Ro. 2:15).

It acts as a witness giving testimony for or against us (2 Cor. 1:12).

It is the judge, condemning or vindicating us (1 John 3:20-21).

And it is the executioner, smiting us with grief when our guilt is discovered (1 Sam. 24:5). Sibbes compared the chastisement of a violated conscience to “a flash of hell.”

(v6-10) Paul’s defense is the hope and resurrection of the dead!

- In the *Old Testament* we have examples such as Enoch and Elijah; both taken up without dying.

- Psalm 16:9-10 declares, *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*

- Daniel 12:2 says, *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

- In the *New Testament* we see those raised to life after death through the power and love of Jesus Christ! - Jairus's daughter (Mark Ch. 5), the widow's son (Luke Ch. 7); Lazarus (John Ch. 11).

- Our Lord's eyewitness account of life after death with *Lazarus and the rich man* (Luke 16:19-31); the *mount of transfiguration* we see *Moses and Elijah* (Matthew Ch. 17); and the resurrection of the Son of God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! This testimony is evidenced in all four gospels, with Paul's additional insight found in 1 Corinthians Ch. 15, with over 500 witnesses!

(v11) Our advocate says to be of good cheer - literally "take courage" and go testify in Rome. (In 1 John 2:1-2 - *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*)

(v12-22) The conspiracy, reality, and God's informant.

(v23-35) God's special delivery.

> Chapter 24- "The Trial Continues!"

(v1-9) Tertulus ("triple hardened"), the prosecutor's accusations.

(v10-21) Paul's defense!

(v22-27) Felix (his name means *Happy, Prosperous*) on trial!

- Let us understand the character of Felix from the Nelson's Bible Dictionary: Felix a roman procurator, or governor, of Judea, he was an unscrupulous ruler. In addition to having three wives, he considered himself capable of committing any crime and avoiding punishment because of his influence with the courts. Because of Felix's tyranny, a group of Jewish revolutionaries, known as the Sicarii ("assassins"), flourished. Retaliation against the Sicarii by the Roman government eventually led to the downfall and destruction of Jerusalem.

> Paul becomes the prosecution whilst Felix and his wife are put on trial with these four INDICTMENTS:

> Indictment #1 – Do you have faith in Christ?

- Jesus said in John 6:47- *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.*

- Jesus said in John 7:37-38 - "*If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.*"

- Jesus said in John 11:25-26 - "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?*"

- Jesus said in John 12:46-47 - "*I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.*

- Jesus said in John 14:12-14 - "*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.*

> Indictment #2 – Are you Righteous?

- Romans 3:21-26 - *But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

> Indictment #3 – Regarding self-control?

- Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 - *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*

- Paul explains in Galatians 5:19-21- *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time*

past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

> Indictment #4 - Judgment is coming!

- Jesus said in Matthew 25:41- "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels'"

- Jude wrote of the future judgment upon non-believing rebellious people in verses 5-7 - But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

- Jesus said in Revelation 21:7-8- He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

(v26) Here's insight on Felix and his sinful ways, "Meanwhile he (Felix) also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him."

Felix kept Paul in suspense about his judgment because he hoped Paul would give him a bribe. He sent for Paul on several occasions. But his hopes for a bribe were unfulfilled, and he kept Paul a prisoner for two years.

- Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 16:26-27 - For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?