

## 82. Paul Had False Accusations Made Against Him

In our last topic, we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children how to learn to walk by faith even if people who reject Christ are trying to destroy them. The Lord has given each Christian a purpose for life and He will keep us alive on this earth until we have completed the purpose He has for us. The Lord protected Paul from those who wanted to kill him. In our topic today, we are going to see that the Lord continued to protect him when the Jewish religious leaders brought false charges against him.

Acts 24:1-3 says, “Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator named Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul. And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: ‘Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, we accept *it* always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.’” Here, we see that the Jewish religious leaders were eager to present their charges against Paul. They did not waste any time getting to Caesarea after they had decided what they were going to say against Paul. They also brought an orator with them to present their case against Paul.

Tertullus, the orator, began by trying to flatter Felix and make him feel good. Tertullus said that Felix had made it possible for them to enjoy great peace. He said that Felix also caused their land to enjoy prosperity, because of the planning and foresight of Felix. He said that they were very thankful for all that Felix had done for their country. In actual fact, Felix was a very brutal man who his own historians said was both a bad man and a bad governor. However, we see that Tertullus was trying to use flattery and tell Felix how good he was in order to get him to side with them against Paul. Here, we see something that many people will do in order to try and get their own way. They will tell people what will make them feel good whether what they say is true or not.

In Acts 24:4-6, we read, “Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us. For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law.” Here, we see that the Jews had asked Tertullus to make four charges against Paul.

First, they said that they found that Paul was a plague. The word translated “plague” means *a pestilence, a plague or a person that is a pest*. The only other two places translated the word “pestilences” as both Matthew and Luke record a statement made by Christ. The disciples had asked Christ what was going to happen in the future. Christ answered, in Luke 21:10-11, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.” Here, and in Matthew 24:7, Christ said that that the earth would experience pestilences. By the use of this word, Tertullus was saying that Paul was like a deadly disease.

Second, Tertullus said that Paul was a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the

world. The word translated “dissension” means *insurrection or strife*. This was the same charge that was made against Barabbas when the Jews chose to have him released instead of Christ. It was also the word that the city clerk used to describe the riot that the silversmiths had caused in Ephesus. Acts 19:40 says, “For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering.” Here, the word is translated “uproar”.

The words of Paul did cause dissension between these very men in Acts 23:6-7, where we read, “But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, ‘Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!’ And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided.” Acts 23:10 uses the word again when that verse says, “Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring *him* into the barracks.” The Pharisees and the Sadducees almost got in a fight when Paul said that he was a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee. However, it was others who wanted to destroy Paul that caused the dissension.

Third, Tertullus said that Paul was a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. The word translated “sect” means *a group of people who follow a system of beliefs*. Both the Sadducees and Pharisees were also called sects, so this accusation meant nothing. Acts 5:17 says, “Then the high priest rose up, and all those who *were* with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation.” Then, Acts 15:5 says, “But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.’” In fact, Paul himself said, in Acts 26:5, “‘They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.’” Paul had followed the system of beliefs of the Pharisees before he became a Christian.

Later, the Jews in Rome said, in Acts 28:22, “‘But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere.’” Paul then spent an entire day explaining what the Old Testament taught about the fact that Jesus is the Christ. Acts 28:24 tells the result when that verse says, “And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.” It was not a crime to believe a system of beliefs whether that was the belief system of the Pharisees, the Sadducees or the beliefs of those who followed Jesus of Nazareth.

Fourth, Tertullus said that Paul had tried to profane the temple. In Acts 21:27-28, we see that Jews from Asia had started a riot by saying, “Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, ‘Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all *men* everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.’” Paul later told Felix that these were the Jews that should have been accusing him that day. Acts 24:17-19 says, “‘Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation, in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor

with tumult. They ought to have been here before you to object if they had anything against me.” Paul said that this statement could be easily verified.

Tertullus went on to say that this was why the Jews had seized Paul and wanted to judge him according to the Jewish law, but were stopped by Lysias. Acts 24:7-9 says, “‘But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took *him* out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him.’ And the Jews also assented, maintaining that these things were so.” Here, we see that Tertullus actually tried to accuse Lysias of preventing them from judging Paul according to the Jewish law.

Tertullus said that Lysias had come and stopped them. He said that Lysias had used great violence to take Paul out of their hands. The Jews were not trying to judge Paul according to their law. Because of the words of the Jews from Asia, the Jews were trying to kill Paul. Acts 21:30 says, “And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut.” Here, we see that it was a mob that was trying to kill Paul as quickly as they could. Then, Acts 21:32 says, “He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.” Lysias did not use any violence, because the mob stopped beating Paul as soon as they saw the commander and the soldiers. Tertullus and the Jews who had told him what to say were just looking for an excuse to get Felix to condemn Paul.

It was true that Lysias had commanded the accusers to come and present their case to Felix. Tertullus said that all Felix would have to do was examine Paul himself and he would see that the charges that he had made against him were true. Actually, the only charge that meant anything to the Romans was the charge that Paul was a creator of dissension. However, they had given no evidence regarding that charge. All they said was that he had created dissension among the Jews throughout the world. What was actually happening was God was fulfilling a promise that He had given to Ananias about Paul at the time of his salvation. Acts 9:15 says, “But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.’” Paul was now going to have the opportunity to speak about Jesus to kings and others in authority including the emperor of the Roman Empire. We will see that Paul was given the opportunity to tell Felix about Jesus that day.

Here, we see that one of the things we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand is the fact that God can turn around the plans of evil men and give us the opportunity to speak for Him. We can help them understand that the Lord uses everything that happens in our lives as Christians for good to make it possible for Him to carry out His purpose for our lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand how God works in and through our lives.