

Governor Felix's Treatment of Paul

We have just looked at the doctrine of resurrection, which the Apostle Paul taught, and preached, and left us so much information. Three times in sermons, or speeches that he gave, the Apostle Paul wasn't allowed to say any more after mentioning the resurrection of the dead. In ACTS 17 during his sermon on Mars hill, we read this concerning Paul preaching about Jesus: *31 ...whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. 32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. 33 So Paul departed from among them.* We see here that the majority in Athens didn't want to hear the message about resurrected Jesus Christ.

Again before the Sanhedrin council in ACTS 23:6 Paul's final words he was allowed to speak unto them were: *...Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. 7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. 8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. 9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.*

This brings us back to ACTS 24 where a few days later Paul was allowed to present his case before the governor Felix, and once again Paul speaks of the resurrection of the dead, but the governor wishes to hear no more from Paul at this time. ACTS 24:20 *Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council, 21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day. 22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.* As we can see governor Felix thought he had heard enough when Paul mentioned for the second time in his speech the fact of the resurrection of the dead.

The rest of ACTS 24, starting with verse 22, concerns Felix's treatment of the Apostle Paul, and we find much information concerning Paul, and governor Felix in this portion of scripture. Let's start by examining a little closer what is stated in verse 22 noting this statement, that Felix laid claim to *...having more perfect knowledge of that way...* . We need to understand the meaning of the word "perfect" as used here, which comes from the Greek word *akribesteron* {ak-ree-bes'-ter-on}, number 197 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, and is only used four times in the New Testament, all by Luke in the book of ACTS. It means "more exactly." The same word was used back in ACTS 18:26 when Aquila and Pricilla took Apollos aside *...and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly,*... meaning they were able to give Apollos a more complete and exact knowledge of the word of God, having been themselves taught by the Apostle Paul, Paul's gospel. The end result was that the Apollos became one of the church Apostles who also taught and preached Paul's gospel. This only happened after Apollos learned Paul's gospel from those who had *...more perfect knowledge of that way...* .

Our text here in ACTS 24:22 states that governor Felix had *...more perfect knowledge of that way,*... which doesn't mean he understood Paul's gospel, but rather he had a better understanding of Jewish religion than to be easily deceived by the misrepresentations of Tertullus, who had just presented his case against Paul. Governor Felix also allowed room in this statement to inquire more information from the Apostle Paul in a private setting. Felix was intrigued by Paul's message. In a previous statement concerning governor Felix we note that his over all treatment of the Apostle Paul was fair according to Roman law, and it was in the context of Roman law that Felix was making his judgment in his case. Felix knew that the Jews would have one point of view, and Paul would have another perspective, which Felix was interested in hearing more about at a later time in private, because as we have noted many time before, Felix was also hoping money should have been given him of Paul, a fact stated in ACTS 24:26. Governor Felix also had another piece of information from which he made his ruling, which was the letter Claudius Lysias had sent him, the context of which was only known by governor Felix at this time. Luke wrote what was in this letter, having learned it's

content at a later time by private interviews with either governor Felix, or Claudius Lysias, or from some other source who later learned of the letters context, possibly the Apostle Paul himself. Here is what Lysias letter to governor Felix said once again: ACTS 23:26 *Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting. 27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. 28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: 29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. 30 And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.* Note that Claudius Lysias stated in his letter that there was nothing laid to the charge of Paul worthy of death, or even bonds, but the final ruling on this subject was to be made by the governor himself, which Felix was now doing. All of this information also helps us better understand how that governor Felix is noted as to *...having more perfect knowledge of that way...*

There is another important side to this statement *...having more perfect knowledge of that way,...* which we will now consider. Governor Felix had a somewhat open mind toward Christians, which is evident in his interactions with the Apostle Paul. In verse 24 Felix will call for Paul, and have Paul preach unto him concerning his faith in Christ, which Paul referenced in verse 14 as being "the way." "The way," which Felix admits to having some knowledge in verse 22, is a statement referencing the Christian doctrine. Believers in Christ are Christians, a term Luke introduced in ACTS 11:26 where he noted that *...the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

Jesus Himself said in JOHN 14:6 *...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* So how did governor Felix know anything about "the way?" There are hundreds of possible answers to this question, but ever since the time of Jesus thousands had received Christ as their own personal Saviour, and the governor would have known this, since he was considered the ruler over many of them. Recall also in ACTS 10 that Peter went to a centurions house in Caesarea, and preached the gospel unto the gentiles gathered there, and in the process they all began to speak in tongues after the Holy Ghost came upon them. This centurion was Cornelius, who ultimately would answer to the governor at Caesarea. Such a devout man was Cornelius that the word of what happened in his house in Caesarea would have long lingered as local knowledge. Perhaps Cornelius met Felix at one point in time, however we are not told this information in scripture. We know that many Christians resided in Caesarea. Philip the evangelist was one of them, and Paul had recently spent many days in his house according to ACTS 21:8-14. We have previously also mentioned that while Paul is held prisoner at Caesarea Felix afforded him the privilege of some liberty, which was according to ACTS 24:23, allowing Paul's acquaintances to visit him. Certainly Philip was one of the primary ones who would visit Paul during his imprisonment here at Caesarea. Obviously governor Felix knew some things concerning Christians, and did not have a problem with Paul's Christian friends visiting him. In short, governor Felix didn't perceive the Christians as a problem.

ACTS 24:22 *And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.* The word "deferred" is used just three times in scripture, twice in the Old Testament, once here in the New Testament, and it simply means to delay or postpone something. Governor Felix was putting off his decision in Paul's case until a later time using Lysias as his excuse for delaying his judgment. Claudius Lysias would be an ideal neutral third party witness for governor Felix to examine in order to know the uttermost in this matter, for Lysias would be able to answer the charges brought forth against Paul in ACTS 24:5 of whether or not Paul was stirring up sedition at Jerusalem. And Lysias could also inform governor Felix about what exactly did take place during Paul's arrest, and his subsequent encounters with the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. However in the end we never read of governor Felix calling for Claudius Lysias to hear what he had to say in Paul's defense. We do know from ACTS 25:2 & 3 that the Jewish Sanhedrin council kept on top of their case against Paul, and when the next governor Festus took Felix's place two years later, they were right there

again requesting further judgment against Paul. So governor Felix's best efforts to "defer" the Jews against Paul lasted until he was no longer governor.

ACTS 24:23 tells us this about governor Felix's further treatment of the Apostle Paul: *And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.* Here we see governor Felix showing the Apostle Paul some favor, but on the other hand he wasn't going to release Paul either. In their book on *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Conybeare and Howson shed the following light, which helps us further understand what was happening here. They wrote: "When an accusation was brought against a Roman citizen, the magistrate, who had criminal jurisdiction in a case, appointed the time for hearing the cause, and detained the accused in custody during the interval. He was not bound to fix any definite time for the trial, but might defer it at his own arbitrary pleasure; and he might also commit the prisoner at his discretion to any of the several kinds of custody recognized by the Roman law. These were as follows: --First, confinement in the public gaol (*custodia publica*), which was the most severe kind; the common gaols throughout the Empire being dungeons of the worst description, where prisoners were kept in chains, or even bound in positions of torture. Of this we have seen an example in the confinement of Paul and Silas at Philippi. Secondly, free custody (*custody libera*), which was the mildest kind. Here the accused party was committed to the charge of a magistrate or senator, who became responsible for his appearance on the day of trial; but this species of detention was only employed in the case of men of high rank. Thirdly, military custody (*custodias militaris*), which was introduced at the beginning of the Imperial regime. In this last species of custody the accused person was given in charge to a soldier, who was responsible with his own life for the safe keeping of his prisoner. This was further secured by chaining the prisoner's right hand to the soldiers left. The soldiers of course relieved one another in this duty. Their prisoner was usually kept in their barracks, but sometimes allowed to reside in a private house under their charge." {End of quoting Conybeare and Howson}.

So we see that the Apostle Paul was given to the care of a centurion, that he was to be kept in custody, but with some liberty in that his friends and acquaintances could come and visit him at will. Governor Felix was walking a political tight rope of sorts by doing this. On one hand he needed to appease the Jews, who he was ruler over, and who could cause grievous things against his administration if they felt ill treatment. And actually history records that Felix lost most of the respect he had with the Jews by his fraternizing with the Gentile population, which resulted in Porcius Festus being appointed governor within a couple of years from our time frame of ACTS 24:23. On the other hand Governor Felix sensed that the Apostle Paul had really done nothing worthy of bonds just like Claudius Lysias letter had stated, but ACTS 24:26 notes that Felix also hope to get money out of Paul, so he kept Paul in military custody (*custodias militaris*). Even though governor Felix has been noted by us to have treated Paul fairly, the end result was that Paul was still held prisoner. The fact that governor Felix still held Paul prisoner for as long as he did only shows that he had little regard for Roman law, for by keeping Paul prisoner the length of time he did, he was violating Roman law concerning a Roman citizen, and their right to a speedy trial. No wonder then that history records Felix was a poor governor.

Having now looked at the circumstances surrounding Paul's imprisonment here at Caesarea, let's focus, if we can, on what was taking place in the heart of the Apostle Paul. Of course we can not see what goes on in ones heart, but we can see the heart attitude manifest in the actions of a believer. We know that the Apostle Paul didn't put his confidence in a man, but his confidence was in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul had already penned these thoughts found in 2 CORINTHIANS 1:8 *For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: 9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: 10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;...* So we see that the Apostle Paul continued to trust the Lord irregardless of the circumstances.

Remember that Paul also knew some information concerning what was going to happen to him, for the Lord had revealed certain things to him. Most recently Jesus had

appeared unto Paul and told him in ACTS 23:11 *...Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.* The who, what, where, when, and how this was going to happen wasn't told Paul. His responsibility was to believe God that this would happen, and leave the rest up to God. If governor Felix chose to hold Paul prisoner, even if it seemed unjust, it was working a far greater and exceeding eternal weight of glory in the life, and faith of the Apostle Paul. Paul had already written these words found in 2 CORINTHIANS 4:17 *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.* Again the only way to see such things is with eyes of faith, which all full overcomers must have.

Another piece of information that the Apostle Paul always carried with him was the fact of the statement the Lord told Ananias of Damascus back when Paul first got saved. No doubt Ananias shared this information with Paul, which we find recorded in scripture in ACTS 9:15 *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.* Paul took these facts to heart, and knew that such things were on his race course. Paul wrote in PHILIPPIANS 1:29 *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;...* In 1 THESSALONIANS 3:4 Paul noted: *For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.* In 2 TIMOTHY 2:12 Paul emphasized: *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him:...* And in 2 TIMOTHY 3:12 Paul stated a fact he knew: *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.* So we see that here in Caesarea the Lord was working things in the heart of a New Testament full overcomer, and the Lord was using governor Felix to aid in Paul's spiritual growth.

ACTS 24:23 *And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.* We have examined the first part of this verse concerning the kind of custody that the Apostle Paul was now held under, and some of the "liberty" he now was given as a prisoner here in Caesarea. The last half of the verse concerns some of the privileges of the "liberty" Paul was given, that the centurion responsible for Paul's safe keeping *...should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.* This "liberty" given unto Paul as a prisoner was broad in scope, and far reaching as we will now begin to see. And the reason this "liberty" was so wide spread is due in part to the number of acquaintances Paul had, and the length of time he was held in Caesarea. Jumping ahead a few verses to ACTS 24:27 we find that Paul was a prisoner at Caesarea for two years. These two years, noted by Scofield to be two silent years at Caesarea, were not silent years at all. True, the Apostle Paul didn't do any traveling during this time, but his ministry as an Apostle continued in a slightly different fashion while being held prisoner in Caesarea. Let's consider some of what took place in Paul's life during these two years.

We know a little about the heart attitude of the Apostle Paul from the things he said, and the things he wrote about. One statement he already made back in ACTS 20:23 in his statement to the Ephesian elders was *...that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide (or await for) me.* So we see that the Apostle Paul knew, and expected to be held in bonds for the preaching of the gospel. Ananias of Damascus had told Paul what the Lord had revealed unto him, that he must suffer some great things for Jesus name's sake, (ACTS 9:16) and Paul was here in Caesarea suffering the effects of preaching the gospel of Christ, as he knew he would. Yet in all of this we don't find the Apostle Paul complaining, but rather continuing running his particular race course. Some years later when Paul, still a prisoner, writes his letter to the Ephesians, he states in EPHESIANS 3:1 *...I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,...* Again in EPHESIANS 4:1 Paul would add: *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,...* Paul was called to be an Apostle to the Gentiles, and he knew a part of this calling meant being held prisoner, but he always acknowledged it was the Lord who was holding him prisoner, and in so doing Paul was proclaiming victory in Christ Jesus! Hadn't he

already written this statement: *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* (ROMANS 8:28)? "All things" in Paul's life meant being held prisoner. "All things" in Paul's life meant suffering many different kinds of afflictions. "All things" in Paul's life meant being held prisoner in Caesarea for two years. Paul had also already penned this thought found in ROMANS 8:18 *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* So we glimpse a little of what was going on in the heart of the apostle Paul during this time in his life. And there was plenty of opportunity for Paul to continue doing the Lord's work while being held prisoner at Caesarea.

Again in ACTS 24:23 the centurion in charge of Paul was given these orders of governor Felix: *...that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.* This word "minister" comes from a rarely used Greek verb *hupereteo* {hoop-ay-ret-eh'-o}, number 5256 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, meaning to render service, or to minister. Governor Felix meant for the acquaintances of Paul to be able to come freely unto him, and render to Paul such good works, prayer, and such ministry like services that Paul would need. In my mind those acquaintances of Paul administering to his needs, received far more spiritual benefit than they were able to give. No doubt they came to lift Paul's spirits, and went out with their own spirits lifted higher. Additionally Paul's acquaintances were allowed to furnish him with any of the comforts, and conveniences of life that Paul would need, or requested.

And lest we think that Paul's work as an Apostle was now being hindered, let us think again. Paul was right where the Lord wanted him at this point in his life. Remember that the word "Apostle" comes from the Greek word *apostolos* {ap-os'-tol-os}, number 652 in the Strong's Greek concordance, and it means a delegate, or a messenger, one sent forth with orders. The Apostle Paul received his order from Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, where he was told to be a minister and a witness unto the Gentiles to whom he was being sent, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. {See ACTS 26:16-18}. The Lord didn't tell Paul that all of these Gentiles were out in the wide open spaces running free. Some were in prisons, and some were assigned to prisoners in prison, such as the centurion that was commanded to keep Paul here in ACTS 24:23. Paul was now entering a period in his life designed by the Lord where he was going to be able to spend more time one on one with people, his acquaintances, teaching his gospel in much detail, and answering any questions that may come up. What an opportunity this was for both Paul's acquaintances, and for Paul himself.

Let's consider the list of the acquaintances of Paul who could have visited him during the two years he was at Caesarea. The names of those traveling with him before his arrest at Jerusalem were no doubt the same as found in ACTS 20:4. ACTS 20:4 *And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.* Brother Copley calls these men of ACTS 20:4 "the faithful seven," and we have studied them before, {see pages 605-608 of these notes}. Our assumption is that all of these men went all the way to Jerusalem with Paul, and if they did, certainly they would have been free to visit him while in custody in Caesarea. Of the above mentioned seven we know from ACTS 21:29 that Trophimus made it to Jerusalem. Also ACTS 27:2 tells that Aristarchus was with Paul when he sailed from Caesarea, so, no doubt, he was with Paul during these two years that Paul was in Caesarea. COLOSSIANS 4:10 mentions Aristarchus as a "fellowprisoner" of Paul, and in PHILEMON 24 Paul names Aristarchus a "fellowlabourer." Thus we see that Aristarchus was very close to the Apostle Paul, and stayed near him for the rest of Paul's life. Additionally ACTS 20:5 indicates that Luke was with Paul probably with Paul from that point forward in his life.

These two years that Paul would be held in Caesarea would afford Luke the perfect opportunity to accomplish much of the work he left us in scripture, that being his writing the gospel according to LUKE, and the ACTS of the Apostles. While visiting Paul in prison in Caesarea, Luke could acquire information on the details of Paul's life that he didn't already know about. Paul could have easily informed Luke about the everyday

experiences he had on his early missionary journeys before Luke joined him on later trips. Recall that the Apostle Paul was sent on his missionary journeys from Antioch, Syria, and that a prominent man in that assembly, perhaps their pastor, was Theophilus, to whom Luke addressed his two scriptural documents. {Study LUKE 1:1-4 and ACTS 1:1 & 2}. Certainly Paul knew Theophilus, and must have in one way or another encouraged Luke to write him. Luke addresses Theophilus as though he knew him also, however scripture doesn't tell how this was. In LUKE 1:1 & 2 Luke explains to Theophilus that the stories he is writing were true stories *...of those things which are most surely believed among us...* as told by those *...which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word.* In other words Luke in his gospel of LUKE is writing in order the stories of Jesus that he knows is true, because he interviewed many of the eyewitnesses, who *...by many infallible proofs...* witnessed the events surrounding Jesus and His ministry, even the forty days He ministered after His resurrection! In his record of the ACTS of the Apostles Luke expounds on what took place from the time Jesus "was taken up" (ACTS 1:2) until the time of when Paul was in Rome.

A lot of the things Luke wrote in his scripture records are not recorded elsewhere. For example, consider Mary the Mother of Jesus. Luke had to have interviewed her. No doubt Mary told Luke the story of Zacharias and Elisabeth, the parents of John the Baptist, because Mary was the cousin of Elisabeth according to LUKE 1:36, and Mary stayed with them for three months according to LUKE 1:56. In my mind there is little doubt that Mary told Luke the story of how the angel Gabriel came unto her and explained about the birth of Jesus. No doubt it was Mary the Mother of Jesus who told Luke in LUKE 2:19 that she pondered the many things she heard about Jesus in her heart, for how would Luke know what thoughts were in her heart, unless she revealed them unto him? Study LUKE 2:18 also and see that there were things told by the shepherds who were watching their flocks on the night Jesus was born; things told to Luke by Mary the Mother of Jesus, and Luke wrote these things down in his gospel record. No doubt Mary also told Luke the story of Jesus as a twelve year old in LUKE 2, and how again she kept all these sayings of Jesus as a twelve year old in her heart. Mary didn't ponder these things, or keep these sayings in her heart for the rest of her life, for she shared these thoughts of her heart with Luke, who wrote some of them down in his gospel records of LUKE, and THE ACTS. We wouldn't know that Mary the Mother of Jesus and His brothers were in the upper room with the Apostles had not Luke recorded this for us in ACTS 1:14. So we see that Luke got a lot of information about the life of Jesus from Mary the Mother of Jesus herself, and he had the time to do this while the Apostle Paul was being held prisoner at Caesarea.

Additionally Luke must have interviewed several others in Jerusalem who were there on the day of Pentecost, that were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. The Apostles Peter and John could have also been interviewed by Luke several times during the two years Paul was prisoner in Caesarea, and have given Luke many of the details recorded for us in ACTS 1-12.

Within the previous month from our time frame of ACTS 24, Luke would have been introduced to Philip the evangelist when Paul and his traveling companions stayed at Philip's house. {Study ACTS 21:8-10}. Philip the evangelist lived in Caesarea, and certainly would have been one of the acquaintances of Paul allowed to visit with Paul during these two years. Luke then also would of had ample opportunity to fill in the gaps of what took place between Pentecost, and the stoning of Stephen. In order to complete the 8th chapter of ACTS Luke would of had to interview Philip. Perhaps Philip also related details to Luke that are found in the 6th chapter of ACTS also. Certainly Philip and Stephen were close associates, and much of the information we have concerning Stephen may have come from Philip. The content of Stephen's sermon found in ACTS 7 could have only come from one source, the former Saul of Tarsus, who now was the Apostle Paul. The words of Stephen's sermon pricked Saul of Tarsus heart, and were remembered by him for years to come, and related to Luke, who put them in writing.

It is quite possible that Cornelius, a Gentile centurion in Caesarea according to ACTS 10:1, may have also been interviewed by Luke during these two years that Paul was being held prisoner in Caesarea. If Luke didn't interview Cornelius, he certainly came

across other who knew him, and were familiar with the events that took place in the house of Cornelius where the gift of the Holy Ghost was first poured out upon the Gentiles, and they spake with tongues, all of this according to ACTS 10:44-46. Certainly Peter also could have given Luke his perspective on this outstanding event, and no doubt Peter did fill in much of the details recorded in ACTS 10. Similarly the events of ACTS 12 that involved Peter's escape from Herod's prison may have been told to Luke by Peter himself. Possibly John whose surname is Mark also told Luke of these very same events, for John Mark's name is first mentioned by Luke in ACTS 12:12.

The rest of the events of ACTS 12 through ACTS 28 Luke recorded from interviews with the Apostle Paul himself, and from his personal experiences as a traveling companion of the Apostle Paul, especially from ACTS 20:5 on.

One of the most interesting stories of Luke found in the book of ACTS (to my way of thinking) concerns Philip, whom we have discussed before. {See these notes starting on page 682}. Of the seven men of honest report, and full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom appointed over the business of ministering to the Grecian widows, and serving tables in ACTS 6, Philip's name comes up more than any of the rest. In total we find this Philip's name mentioned sixteen times in scripture, and sixteen again is the number of LOVE. (1 CORINTHIANS 13, the LOVE chapter in the Bible list sixteen points of LOVE.) Philip's ministry is expounded by Luke in the 8th chapter of ACTS, and in ACTS 8:40 we find Philip the evangelist, as he became known, taking up residence in Caesarea. Philip was one of the ones noted in ACTS 8:1 to be scattered abroad after the stoning of Stephen, who no doubt was a very close associate of Philip. It's hard to put a definite time line on how much time has elapsed since the stoning of Stephen until the events of ACTS 24, but around twenty to twenty five years have passed since that time. We find Philip still residing in Caesarea in ACTS 21:8, for the Apostle Paul, and Luke, and the rest of those traveling with Paul, stayed in the house of Philip the evangelist in Caesarea. This would have been about three or four weeks before the events we have been studying about in ACTS 24. So, connecting the dots, we find that Philip the evangelist to be one of Paul's acquaintances that would be allowed to visit Paul while Paul was being held prisoner here in Caesarea.

One the surface this may not appear to be such a big deal, but go back and review the treatment Stephen received, and how it was Saul of Tarsus who was standing by giving his approval as Stephen was being stoned to death for his testimony of Jesus Christ. This very same Saul of Tarsus is now the Apostle Paul, a man now very much like Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom, and full of faith, and power, who did great wonders among the people; a man who now himself has been brought before the very same Jewish Sanhedrin that Stephen was brought before. If Philip ever harbored any resentment, or bitterness against Saul of Tarsus, the Apostle Paul, we do not read of it in scripture. Just the opposite is shown us of Philip, for he manifests the love of God to the Apostle Paul as he was taught by the Apostles to do. The Apostle John, and the Apostle Peter, and the Apostle Paul all wrote in scripture a total of twelve times the fact that we are to "love one another." I am sure in my own mind that Paul, and Philip, and Luke were all gathered together one day when the topic of Stephen came up. Eternity will tell who brought the subject of Stephen up first, but I imagine it was the Apostle Paul who first told of how those Holy Ghost inspired words of Stephen pricked his conscience day and night until the day he himself met Jesus on the road to Damascus, and surrendered his life unto God. Paul also probably also related how that there wasn't a day that went by that he didn't remember seeing that sweet face of an angel, Stephen! {Study ACTS 6:15}. And how the ministry of Stephen affected his own life. Paul would then express his gratitude unto the Lord that he would even be put into the ministry by the Lord, and be even accounted as the least of the Apostles, even though he felt he wasn't fit to be called an Apostle, because he persecuted the church of God. {See 1 CORINTHIANS 15:9}. Philip would then relate many accounts from the life of Stephen, and how it was by the power of the Holy Ghost that he did so many great, and mighty miracles among the people. And Luke would put these stories down on paper, and later write them again in his letter to Theophilus, which we know at the ACTS of the Apostles.

Now for the next two years Philip had the opportunity to learn first hand the gospel of Paul from Paul's own mouth! What wonderful fellowship they must of had. And the man that felt responsible for the harm that came to Stephen, let the Lord use

him to minister his gospel unto Philip. The end result being that Philip got to learn the doctrines of Paul, and spread them through his own evangelistic ministry. Thus Philip becomes a great example to us of a New Testament full overcomer. I think that the Holy Spirit left us an example of the fact that Philip ended up in this church age, in catching away Philip from one place and transporting him to another in an instant, a figure of the outward translation that will take place at the end of this church age. {See again ACTS 8:39 & 40}. Philip's name means "lover of horses," showing that he loved the race, and figuratively speaking, the Apostle Paul was one of the best race horses (if you will) to be associated with.

ACTS 24:24 *And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. 25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, 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. 26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.*

We have considered the some of the character of Felix earlier. {See page 798 of these notes.} In verse 24-26 we see more of Felix's interaction with the Apostle Paul. And we see in these verses that Felix brought his wife Drusilla, a Jewess, a Jewish princess to be exact, to also hear what the Apostle Paul had to say. Historians all agree that Drusilla was a real beauty. She was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I of ACTS 12 fame, and the sister of Herod Agrippa II, whom the Apostle Paul will be brought before in ACTS 26. When Drusilla was six years old she was promised in marriage to Epiphanes, son of Antiochus, King of Comagene, who had said he would embrace Judaism on her account. However Epiphanes did not keep his word, so Drusilla's brother Agrippa II refused to ratify the marriage. Around 53 A.D. Drusilla was given in marriage by her brother Agrippa II to Azizus, King of Emesa, upon his consent to be circumcised. While married to Azizus, Felix saw, and fell in love with Drusilla, and used his influence to persuade her to leave her husband, and marry him. Drusilla then was living in adultery with Felix, for as Josephus noted, "she was prevailed upon to transgress the laws of her forefathers, and to marry Felix." History records that Drusilla was the third wife of Felix, that she had at least one son by Felix. Drusilla and this son of hers were killed approximately twenty-one years after our time frame of ACTS 24 by a volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius late in the summer of 79 A.D., during which well over one thousand people died.

The last part of ACTS 24:24 tells us that Felix *...sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ*. No doubt Paul had learned from the soldiers now responsible for his keeping some of the personal history of governor Felix, and the Apostle Paul was more than glad to share his own testimony concerning his faith in Jesus Christ. Whether governor Felix sent for Paul on account of his wife Drusilla has long been a point of debate, which bears some merit in that Drusilla may have been more familiar with the doctrine of Jesus Christ than was Felix.

ACTS 24:25 gives us an outline of Paul's gospel message he preached unto Felix and Drusilla, stating that Paul *...reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*. The Greek word translated "reasoned" here is one we have come across before in this study, which is *dialogomai* {dee-al-eg'-om-ahee}, number 1256 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, also translated in New Testament scripture as dispute, reason with, reason, speak, preach, and preach unto. Clearly the Apostle Paul preached unto Felix and Drusilla.

The order of Paul's sermon was *...of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*. Let's think about this for a moment. Governor Felix was used to people speaking to him in terms similar to how Tertullus had addressed him in ACTS 24:2-4, which was with flowery words that put the governor on a high pedestal. The Apostle Paul let his words come from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and in so doing Paul was kind and loving as he preached on the topics *...of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*,... subjects that wouldn't inspire Felix to set Paul free, but facts that all sinners need to hear, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they too may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus,

paraphrasing from ACTS 26:18. If the motive of Felix and Drusilla was to get some kind of entertainment or amusement from the Apostle Paul, they got more than they bargained for. If they truly wanted to hear Paul's gospel message, then they also got more than they expected. No matter their motive, they were privileged, whether they realized it or not, to hear first hand the truth of the gospel from the mouth of the Apostle of the Gentiles!

Let's look at the three points of Paul's sermon to governor Felix and Drusilla outlined here in verse 25 starting with "righteousness," so let's address this subject first. Brother Hill used to make this statement: "God can not look on sin with the least degree of allowance." This is a true statement, yet not a direct quote from scripture. However HABAKKUK 1:13 makes a similar statement concerning the Lord God, stating in part: *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:...* . Yet on the cross of Calvary, Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, as explained in 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* While Jesus was on the cross we find that there was a three hour span when darkness was over the land. MATTHEW 27:45 & 46 states it like this: *Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* It was during this time span of darkness when Jesus was made sin for us that the face of God was turned away from our Saviour, for in fact "God can not look on sin with the least degree of allowance." ROMANS 5:8 reads: *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* HEBREWS 10:12 goes on to state this concerning Jesus: *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;...* . Let's also note one more statement found in HEBREWS 1:9 concerning our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

These are the kind of facts that the Apostle Paul may have used as he began to reason with governor Felix and his wife Drusilla about righteousness. Man's logic would begin a discourse with the likes of sinful Felix and Drusilla by addressing the judgment to come first, but that was not the way the Holy Ghost inspired Paul to witness unto them. Perhaps Paul recalled his own testimony unto them, how that as a persecutor of the church of God he unwittingly was the chiefest of sinners, yet God dealt with him in mercy, rather than in judgment. Paul later wrote this statement found in TITUS 2:11-14 *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

It's impossible for us to exactly know where the Holy Ghost led Paul to start his discourse before governor Felix, and his wife Drusilla, but Paul may have recalled a statement he wrote in ROMANS 3:10 (referencing facts found in PSALMS 14:3 and 53:3) on how that *...There is none righteous, no, not one.* Perhaps the Apostle Paul gave facts concerning Abram, before he was called Abraham, in GENESIS 15:6 where it is noted that Abram *...believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.* (Three times in recent letters the Apostle Paul has quoted this scripture, once in ROMANS 4:3, next in ROMANS 4:22, and again in GALATIANS 3:6). Paul could have then gone on to state some more facts he had penned in his letter to the ROMANS; on how that *...all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;* (ROMANS 3:23); and how that *...God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us...* (ROMANS 5:8). Paul next could have quoted from ROMANS 10:9-13 where he wrote: *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

This would have been all Paul needed to say on this subject ...as he reasoned of righteousness... before Felix and Drusilla.

Next Paul moved on in his sermon to Felix and Drusilla, and reasoned of temperance, which references in a broad sense self-control. The thought of temperance used here denotes a restraint of all passions and evil inclinations, and may be applied to such things a prudence, chastity, and moderation in general. More specifically Paul had also recently written in his letter unto the GALATIANS of these kinds of things, and stated in GALATIANS 5:19 *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* Perhaps as Paul reasoned of temperance before Felix and Drusilla, he listed these items, knowing full well that both Felix and Drusilla were participants in these kinds of activities, as are most sinners. Paul later would again write unto Timothy of the state of mankind, noting this in 2 TIMOTHY 3:1 *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.* None of these things are foreign to any of us, for we live in these last days where all of this kind of activity has become more and more common place.

But back to the Apostle Paul, imagine bringing all of this up to the governor Felix, who has the power and authority to set you free! We see here that the Apostle Paul was not a respecter of persons, and had already written this statement in ROMANS 2:11 *For there is no respect of persons with God.* {See also EPHESIANS 6:9 and COLOSSIANS 3:25}. Certainly governor Felix, and his wife Drusilla could sense that the Apostle Paul was here preaching to them the truth in love without fear of personal repercussions. Note what Paul later wrote unto Timothy in his first letter to him: 1 TIMOTHY 2:1 *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. 7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity (truth).* Truly as we have noted before, the Apostle Paul had the spirit of a full overcomer, and had this heart attitude expressed to the Ephesian elders in ACTS 20:24 *But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.* Certainly Paul preached to governor Felix and his wife Drusilla ...the gospel of the grace of God.

This then was some serious preaching that the Apostle Paul was allowed to do by the power of the Holy Ghost before Felix and Drusilla, which he concluded with a discourse on "judgment to come." Where does this "judgment to come" occur? This depends upon one's personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself stated in JOHN 5:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.* In other words, the believer when he accepts Jesus into his heart as his own personal Saviour, also accepts the judgment that passed upon Christ for him on the cross of Calvary, thus the "judgment to come" that Paul addressed Felix and Drusilla about is really a non issue with the believer, having already been dealt with on the cross of Calvary. Paul already emphasized in his letter to the ROMANS this fact, stating in ROMANS 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,...*

There is plenty of scripture to back these facts up. We just read in ROMANS 8:1 that *...There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,...* and ISAIAH 53:6 explains why, because *...the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* PSALMS 103:12 tells us: *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.* Read ISAIAH 38:17 and note the last part of this verse: *...but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.* ISAIAH 43:25 tells us these words of the Lord: *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* HEBREWS 8:12 continues this thought of those who know the Lord as their Saviour, stating: *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.* This thought is repeated in HEBREWS 10:17 *And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.* MICAH 7:18 & 19 reads: *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. 19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.* Thus we see that to the believer *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,...* as we read above in ROMANS 8:1.

However in our text of ACTS 24:25, Felix and Drusilla, as the unbelieving sinners Paul was addressing, will face the “judgment to come” that Paul told them about, that is if they didn’t accept Jesus into their own heart as their own personal Saviour, and there is no scriptural evidence that they did, even though they were given an excellent opportunity here in ACTS 24 to do so. The “judgment to come” for the unbelievers is spoken of in REVELATION 20. REVELATION 20:11 *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

Perhaps the Apostle Paul concluded his sermon Felix and Drusilla on this subject of the “judgment to come” with similar words found in HEBREWS 2:3 *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;... ?* The calling of the Apostle Paul was to preach the gospel; to preach the word; to be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine as Paul wrote unto Timothy in 2 TIMOTHY 4:2. Paul’s mission was not to convict, or convince governor Felix, and his wife Drusilla of sin, for that is the function of the Holy Ghost. Jesus stated that this was the mission of the Holy Ghost in JOHN 16:8, where He noted that *...when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:...* . The Greek word that is translated “reprove” in JOHN 16:8, (number 1651 in the Strong’s Greek Concordance, elegcho {el-eng'-kho}), also translates to convince, or convict. It wasn’t the Apostle Paul’s job to convict Felix and Drusilla of sin, but rather to preach the gospel unto them by the unction, and power of the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost did the convicting here. This is evident because of the reaction of governor Felix noted in ACTS 24:25 *And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled,...* . Felix trembled means that he was thrown into fear; he became terrified; and he was affrighted; in short he was afraid. {See number 1719 in the Strong’s Greek Concordance, emphobos {em'-fob-os}}. There is a bit of irony here, for Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for speaking the truth of the gospel, faced a judge (Felix) who was not used to hearing the truth, and unaccustomed to being talked to in such a manner that would throw his conscience into such a mental state of alarm. The irony: prisoner Paul preached freedom from sin to a free man and his wife, both who were bound in sin, and didn’t realize their captivity to the law of sin which was in their members.

ACTS 24:25 tells us that as Paul *...reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered,...* . Felix answered what? Obviously the preaching of the Apostle Paul caused governor Felix to answer the question about his

soul. Perhaps the Apostle Paul made a similar statement unto governor Felix and his wife Drusilla that we read of in his sermon to those in Antioch in Pisidia in ACTS 13:38 & 39, which may have been stated by Paul like this: *Be it known unto you therefore, governor and Mrs. Felix, that through Jesus Christ is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.* What ever question, or statement, that the Apostle Paul asked the governor, it was the power of the Holy Ghost that made Felix tremble, and the pride of a foolish heart that responded with these words: *...Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.* When the Philippian jailer was faced with a similar situation in ACTS 16:29 & 30, he came to Paul, and Silas, trembling and fell before them, and said: *...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*

Here in ACTS 24:25 Felix had an opposite response to the urging of the Holy Ghost, *...and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.* These words have to rank as some of the saddest found uttered in scripture, for we never again read of Felix discussing with Paul *"concerning the faith in Christ"* (verse 24). Again as we noted above in quoting from 1 TIMOTHY 2:4, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ would *...have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.* But Felix here rejected the unction of the Holy Ghost as the Apostle Paul informed him concerning his faith in Christ.

Perhaps this episode inspired the Apostle Paul to pen the following statement found in HEBREWS 6. HEBREWS 6:4 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*

It is amazing to me how many different opinions there are concerning the meaning of these three verses in HEBREWS. These verses must be rightly divided, as must all scripture. Paul wrote to Timothy, a Bible student, and close associate of the Apostle Paul: 2 TIMOTHY 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* To the Corinthians Paul wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 14:33 *For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.* If there is confusion in your own mind concerning the above verses from HEBREWS 6, guess where that came from? Let's examine these verses from HEBREWS 6 in their context, and in a little more detail, and be clear in our hearts and minds on what is being said here. Then as you later read and study commentators of this portion of scripture may you too see those who correctly divide the word of truth, and those who don't. And thank God for men like Brother Copley, and Pastors like D. E. Hill, and Gene Hawkins who have taught us scripture rightly divided!

Brother Copley in his study book on HEBREWS writes: "Remember several facts in studying the following perplexing verses. First, the Epistle was not written for Gentile backsliden believers. It was written to Hebrew Christians, that they might see Jesus Christ as the complete fulfillment of all the Old Testament types, shadows and symbols. Second, it has no reference to backsliders today, or any day. If it did, then no backslider could ever be restored; for it reads plainly, "It is impossible to renew them unto repentance, who were once enlightened." There is positively no proof here that people may be saved and afterward lost forever. Notice the grammar here. In verses 4 and 6, the pronominal adjective "those" and the pronoun "they" refer to persons absent, or at a distance. "Them, they and those" always mean persons, or things spoken of; but the pronouns, "you, your and ye" (verses 9-12) mean persons addressed, or spoken to." (Let me add here, so do "us" in verse 1, and "we" in verse 3.) "Do you see the difference? By these grammatical finger-posts, it is plain that the writer spoke TO one company, and ABOUT another company. Keep these facts in mind and all difficulties will vanish. Paul addressed himself to believing Hebrews, to instruct them about themselves and also about unbelieving Hebrews, who had light enough to save them if they had accepted the light." {End of quoting Brother Copley for now.}

Let's read again from HEBREWS 6, verse 1-12, and see what Brother Copley was talking about. HEBREWS 6:1 *Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead*

works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit. 4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. 7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: 8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. 9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. 10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Now let us read some more from Brother Copley's comments as he explains verses 4 through 6. "In your Bible, put a parenthesis after "those" (verse 4) and after "away" (verse 6), so that it will read thus, 4 For it is impossible for those [who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away,] to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

"The six statement of verses 4 and 5 explain who "those" were and what "they" did."

Statement #1. "They were "**once enlightened**" concerning Jesus and the Gospel; for they had heard Him and the apostles Peter, James and John. They were convicted that Jesus was the Messiah and that the promised Holy Spirit had been poured out." Let me interject here that those ...who were once enlightened... in Jesus day, and in Paul's lifetime, knew what they were doing, for they saw the Light, maybe even saw Jesus Himself perform His miracles, or the Apostles after Pentecost, doing the same, but they didn't follow the Light. ACTS 4:16 verifies this where we of the Jewish Sanhedrin: Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.

Statement #2. "They "**tasted of the heavenly Gift**," that is, Jesus, who had announced Himself "**the true Bread from heaven**" (JOHN 6:32). A taste is a very little, just enough to determine the genuineness, or palatableness of food, tho' not enough to afford nourishment. For example, a child said, Salt is what makes the porridge taste bad when it is left out. The Jews heard sufficient truth to convince them, but did not eat enough to convert and save them." Here Brother Copley references JOHN 7:28 which reads: Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. A wine taster doesn't swallow the wine, but spits it out after determining its quality.

Statement # 3. "**And were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.**" This does not mean that they were baptized, or anointed with the Spirit. They simply tasted of the Holy Spirit, even as they tasted Christ; for they could not receive the Spirit without first receiving the Saviour." Here Brother Copley refers to John 14:17, which states: Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. "The Spirit had been poured out upon all flesh, convicting sinners of their sins and Jewish worshipers of their opposition to Christ -- ACTS 2:38." ACTS 2:38 reads: Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. "They were "confounded, amazed and marveled," hearing them speak in their own tongues. Those who yielded to the Spirit's presence and power, became filled with the Spirit. They believed and received and became the "you and ye" to whom Paul wrote" (in HEBREWS

6:9 & 10). Others mocked and scorned, and received nothing but judgment 30 years later, the "them and those" (of HEBREWS 6:4-6)." Stated another way, these Jews whom Paul was referencing in his letter to the HEBREWS, were there, and went along with these good works of the Holy Ghost that was manifest by Jesus Christ, and His Apostles, for they couldn't deny it, as we noted above, yet they didn't become believers.

Statement # 4. "*And have tasted the good word of God.*" "The same principle obtains here as in the foregoing, They heard the Word preached and taught in the power of the Spirit. Jesus taught (MATTHEW 13:19) that the good seed "*was sown in the heart*" of wayside hearers; but the wicked one snatched it away. The stony ground hearers "*heard the Word and with joy received it,*" but being persecuted afterward, became "*offended.*" I have known people to rejoice over the Truth, and afterwards turn it down and fight it. They only tasted the good Word; but were not saved by believing it." Another example of their having *...tasted the good word of God...* is when they marvelled at the gracious words of Jesus in LUKE 4:22, yet they all didn't believe. LUKE 4:22 *And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? ... 28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. 30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way,...* . If these that tasted the good word of God here in LUKE 4 were believers, then why were they filled with wrath at Jesus statements, and willing to kill Him?

Statement # 5. "Those Jews tasted also "*of the dynamics of the age to come.*" The scholars of the Sanhedrin council marvelled at the word of God spoken by Peter and John in ACTS 4:13 too, but they didn't believe them, even though they had tasted the good word of God, and had seen the dynamics, the *powers of the world to come*. Brother Copley writes: "They witnessed miracles, signs and wonders, which were earnest of the super-natural workings of the millennial age. Indeed the first seven years of Pentecostal power were the beginning of the millennium, if the Jews had received Jesus as their Savior and King; but they said, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." The meaning of these five statements, boiled down in the first one -- "*they were once enlightened*" -- is simply this; they were arrested and sufficiently convicted by the Truth to have been saved and filled with the Spirit if they had received it with the heart. They were persuaded that the Old Testament types and symbols were being fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and that the New Way was the right way. Salvation was not in the shadows, but in Christ, the glorious Substance. The Truth they heard was confirmed by many miracles, signs and wonders, wrought in His name. Therefore, the Apostle concludes,"

Statement # 6. "*If they shall fall away*" (literally "having fallen away") means: to deliberately step back from faith in Jesus Christ, to apostatize. "*If they shall fall away*" from the clear light given to them, "*it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance.*" They could have repented of simply turning away by neglect, or postponement; but their falling away was hateful and revengeful -- "*seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame,*" or exposed Him to contempt. They renounced God's Son and His redemptive plan." Brother Copley goes on to reference HEBREWS 10:26 & 27 noting: "*For if we sin willfully*" (deliberately reject Jesus Christ as God's only ample and necessary sacrifice) "*after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more*" (no other) "*sacrifice for sins, But*" (the inevitable consequence) "*a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*" The sacrifice of Christ was enough, and God accepted no other. They had "received the knowledge of the Truth," but not the salvation which the Truth offered. From that knowledge, they fell away, or apostatized, by rejecting it. They did not backslide from the experience of salvation and the anointing with the Holy Spirit, because of sin, or weakness in the flesh, or because of being only babes in Christ. A sample of such falling away is recorded in ACTS 7:54-59."

{ACTS 7:54 *When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. 57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and*

ran upon him with one accord, 58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.}

"Stephen's audience was against Christ. They sinned willfully. When his message cut them to the heart, they *"gnashed on him with their teeth."* When he said, *"I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God,"* *"they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him."* In their wicked hearts, they crucified Christ again and put Him to open contempt. For such folk, there is no repentance, no salvation, no hope. They committed the unpardonable sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost. Only one sin cannot be forgive, viz., the willful sin of rejecting Jesus Christ as the Redeemer and Savior." {End of quoting from Brother Copley.}

Having now examined the meaning of what Paul wrote in HEBREWS 6:4-6, let's read this sentence again. HEBREWS 6:4 *For it is impossible for those [who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away,] to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.* The gist of the sentence is this: *For it is impossible... ..to renew them again unto repentance;... .* To renew again is almost like a redundancy, but that is not the case here. They were brought to the point of repentance at one time, but if they step back away from repentance, knowing full well what they are doing, then Paul is saying, such a one can't be brought back to that point again. All of the other statements in the parenthesis of Brother Copley's suggestion explain who "those" unbelievers were and what "they" did, as we noted above.

Now back to our lesson here in ACTS 24:25 as the Apostle Paul preached unto Felix, and his wife Drusilla, and *...reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,...* we see that *...Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.* We never read of a "convenient season" ever coming again to governor Felix, for the reasons explained above. Felix and his wife Drusilla were offered the opportunity of a life time, which was eternal life, bought and paid for by Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, and they rejected His great salvation. Scripture doesn't record any alarm by Drusilla, perhaps because she had rejected Christ's offer of salvation many times before. What a sad thought.

As for governor Felix we read that he did call for Paul several times after this, for ACTS 24:26 tells us: *He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.* Here we glimpse the heart of Felix, whose heart was set on a corruptible earthen treasure, money. Felix was comfortable to converse with Paul after this, but the subject Felix was interested in talking about was money. *He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul.* Paul's focus since accepting Jesus into his heart on the road to Damascus was always on the Lord, not on money. There is a sad irony here concerning Felix, and his desire to extort money out of Paul, and that irony is this. The Apostle Paul, according to EPHESIANS 3:8, was sent to preach unto the Gentiles *...the unsearchable riches of Christ,...* and governor Felix got to hear this message from the mouth of the Apostle Paul many times, yet spiritually poverty stricken Felix never did see that he was poor and needy; that he needed a Saviour; that he needed redemption through Christ's blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the exceeding riches of God's grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. {Study EPHESIANS 1:7 and 2:7.} Paul presented unto Felix that which money could never buy, eternal life through Jesus Christ our Saviour! Paul offered Felix the opportunity of his lifetime; the best deal ever made to anyone; the opportunity to be *...justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:... ROMANS 3:24,* and the opportunity to be freely given all things. ROMANS 8:32 tells us: *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* Again we ask this question Paul penned in HEBREWS 2:3 *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;... ?*

We have just spent a great deal of time going over the following verses: ACTS 24:24 *And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. 25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, 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. 26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.* And we have previously mentioned that C. I. Scofield in his Bible commentary calls the time between these verses, and ACTS 24:27 *"the silent two years at Caesarea."* However, as we have also noted, these two years in Caesarea in which we are given very little detail by Luke, were not really silent years at all, but rather years where the Apostle Paul got to spend a lot of time in fellowship with those who would visit him, and the list of potential visitors that the Apostle Paul may have had during this time was considerable. Before we move on, let's pause and reflect just how important this one episode recorded in Paul's two years as Felix's prisoner at Caesarea was.

This one event concerned Paul's dealings with the governor Felix, and should highlight to us once again the importance emphasized in scripture of one man's life, and his, or hers, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Essentially Paul asked Felix, what will you do with Jesus? All men must answer this question for themselves. The believer answers this question by asking Jesus to come into their heart, however governor Felix, when given the opportunity to believe on Jesus name, sent the messenger away, hoping for a more convenient season, which, to our knowledge, never came again for him. Paul told the Philippian jailor in ACTS 16:31 to *...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* Governor Felix trembled, and dismissed such urging.

The Apostle John wrote in JOHN 1:12 & 13 about Jesus, and said: *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* Paul wrote to Timothy about the fact that he, Paul himself, was before a sinner, even the chiefest of sinners, having been a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, *Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting...* 1 TIMOTHY 1:16. Later the Apostle John wrote in 1 JOHN 3:23 *And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.* And again in 1 JOHN 5:13 he penned: *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.* All Paul was urging Felix to do was to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, which eternally would have changed the governor's life, and put his name in the Lamb's book of life.

The last thing we read of governor Felix in ACTS 24 is found in verse 27: *But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.* We will talk about the new governor shortly, but let's note here that Felix left Paul bound. The reason Felix left Paul bound is noted *...to shew the Jews a pleasure,...* . Conybeare and Howson note that Felix was no doubt in violation of Roman law to leave a Roman citizen bound, but Felix's motive in doing so was again *...to shew the Jews a pleasure,...* . Desperate men resort to desperate measures, and Felix himself was called back to Rome to face charges of his mal-administration in Judaea by the Jews of Caesarea, who told Nero of the crimes Felix did unto the Jews while he was governor. Perhaps Felix thought it would go somewhat easier on him if he was *...willing to shew the Jews a pleasure,...* by leaving Paul in bonds under the care of a new governor, thus passing the fate of Paul into the new governors hands. What Felix failed to realize in his state of unbelief was that the care of Paul had always been in the hand of the Lord, whom Paul trusted. Paul knew the fact of PSALMS 31:15 *My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.* As for Felix, it seems he escaped the wrath of Nero because of a close friend, who had personal connections with Nero, that put a good word in for him to the Emperor, along with a substantial bribe.