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### How Paul Denied the Charges made Against Him

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## HOW PAUL DENIED THE CHARGES MADE AGAINST HIM

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS  
NUMBER 120  
ACTS 24:11-16

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ACTS 24:11-16 "Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me. But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."

One of the most important things in the Christian life is for the Christian to recognize when he has sinned and failed. Immediately he should confess the sin, get back in fellowship with God and get up and move on. No one can ever achieve anything great in the Christian life without confession and rebound, and no one can live in fellowship with the Lord without this particular grace which God has provided for us. One of the great summary chapters of the Old Testament saints is found in Hebrews 11. Every person named in that chapter is set forth as a great believer. But they all failed, they confessed and got back in fellowship, and they got up and moved on. The principle is this--As long as you are alive the Lord has a purpose for your life and the fact that you have failed at some point doesn't change God's purpose and plan. God's plan calls for ultimate victory and constant victory. One of the greatest victories of all is that when we fail we confess our sins, we get back in fellowship, and we get up and move on. God's grace and God's plan continue with us.

This is a great section of the Book of the Acts. Right after his great failure, Paul confessed, got back in fellowship, and he moved right on into the greatest ministry of his whole life. After this great failure Paul moved on into the twelve greatest years of his entire ministry. Paul's strong point was grace, and for this reason Satan followed Paul around in every move he made and did his best to defeat him. In his letters Paul refers to it often and we know that Satan was constantly on his trail. Every time Paul spoke Satan was a captive audience for he wanted to know clearly the doctrine Paul enunciated. This is the way Satan knew the doctrine of the Mystery and thereby he was able to launch his counter measures. Satan has succeeded in deluding whole generations and great segments of the human race by turning them away from Bible doctrine and truth. Church history records these many failures. Now in this courtroom in Caesarea we are going to witness Paul's complete recovery from his failure in Jerusalem. We are to witness how Paul will successfully refute the brilliant Tertullus and how he will confront some of the great leaders of the Roman Empire with the message of Christ. Tertullus knew that the Jews didn't have a case against Paul, but he invented a case for them and he presented it brilliantly. He buttered up Felix with sweetness and flattery and made three serious accusations against Paul. For more than a thousand years the Roman government had stood against rioting and this was one of the secrets of Roman stability. They demanded that every individual recognize law and order. Tertullus not only accused Paul of trying to start a riot, but he claimed Paul had led a revolt and had profaned the Holy Temple.

Paul began his answer when Felix gave him a nod and made it clear that Paul was free to speak. Paul called Felix a judge, a "krites," which really means critic, and means that he recognized Felix as the one who heard all the major cases. Felix was the province Supreme Court, and if he couldn't settle the matter, then he would pass it on to the National Court in Rome. If this happened, then Paul would go before Nero, for he was the emperor at the time of Paul's arrival in Rome. Felix had had seven years experience as a judge in Caesarea, so Paul said, "I gladly make my own defense." Paul was completely objective in the way in which he presented his case. Religion is always subjective and causes all kinds of abnormal guilts. The Romans were objective in their courts and they insisted on fairness and evidence. Paul appealed to their fairness Paul's approach, therefore, was objective, logical and impersonal. No man alive in the earth at that time was more capable to make his defense than Paul. Paul is going to show that his presence in the temple, though it violated the grace of God, it did not violate any Jewish law and it was in no way connected with violence and wrong doing.

ACTS 24:11 "Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship." Here Paul is going to deny the charges against him. Legally, Paul was innocent. "You are able to fully understand" is what Paul actually said. In other words, Paul was saying to Felix that he was fully going to answer those charges made against him, and that Felix would fully understand the evidence he was about to present. Paul was brief, came straight to the point, and gave evidence which Felix could easily understand. The quiet calm, lucid way in which Paul spoke was quite amazing in the light of the fact that for many days Paul had been under extreme pressure. But Paul exemplified his relaxed mental attitude. He was a man cool, calm, and collected. Paul reminded Felix that it was but twelve days before when he went up to Jerusalem, and six of those twelve days he had been in prison. He had been charged with a riot, with a revolt and with profaning the Holy Temple and Paul is going to show that in just a few brief days it would have been impossible for him to do the things they claimed he did. There just wasn't enough time to do all the things they claimed against Paul.

Now Paul could have been very sarcastic and he could have said something like this--"Yes, honorable Felix, I am a genius and I have done all these things they have thrown against me. Even though I just had six days in which to work, I started a riot, I led a revolt, and I profaned the Holy Temple. Believe you me, Governor Felix, I am a genius." Paul could have used sarcasm like that, but he didn't. I am quite sure Felix could see through all this and it must have been refreshing to Felix, after Tertullus had given him all that flattery and eye wash, to hear something so straight forward and truthful. There was just no way for Paul to incite a riot, become the leader of a revolt, and profane the Holy Temple in the space of six days. "To worship" is a future participle and it means he had this purpose in mind. In other words, Paul was saying something like this--"Yes, Governor Felix, I have been in Jerusalem twelve days, half of that time in jail, but my purpose in going to Jerusalem was to worship." Now this is the way Paul answered Tertullus. You can't profane the temple and worship at the same time.



ACTS 24:12 "And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:" This is an answer to the third charge. He didn't start an argument in the temple and he didn't steal any money from the temple. Jewish worship couldn't go on in the temple while some big argument was going on. So Paul had given a direct contradiction to the charges made against him. Paul had gone there for the purpose of worship, and the Jews were the ones who had disturbed the worship in the temple, not Paul. In other words, Paul was showing Felix that the Jews were guilty of the things Tertullus had laid at his door. So according to Paul, under Roman law, the Jews were guilty, not he. "I didn't interrupt them, they interrupted me" is what Paul was saying. So in this verse Paul simply says that they have given an accusation against him which they cannot prove. In other words, Tertullus had misrepresented the case. The only ones, as Paul will show later, who accused him were Asian Jews and they were so guilty for so many violations against Rome that they didn't show up at Caesarea. If they had, they would have been jailed immediately.

ACTS 24:13 "Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me." This is Paul's challenge to the defense. By proof they had no evidence or witness against Paul. Paul was really saying, "All Tertullus has said against me is a lot of hot air. He has no evidence, no proof, no witness." A little later on Paul will drop the word "money" and Felix will tune in immediately and will keep Paul in jail another year hoping eventually to get a bribe from Paul. Felix had heard about that fantastic offering Paul took to the Jerusalem Jews and Felix just thought how nice it would be to get his hands on about a \$100,000.00 so he and his beautiful Drusilla could live in comfort. Even though Paul presented a perfect defense, he will be kept on in bonds.

ACTS 24:14 "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:" In this verse Paul recognized his connection with Judaism. The word "I confess" is "homologeo" and means to cite, to state, to agree with something that has been said. Paul isn't confessing guilt here, he is simply stating information. He is stating facts aside from emotion. He called Christianity "The way." This may be the best name Christianity has ever had. "The way" is dogmatic. It means "This is it, and there isn't any other way." There is nothing like "It may be this or it may be that." Whatever else you can say about Christianity you cannot say that it isn't dogmatic. Paul mentioned the word "heresy" and I want us to get some points on the meaning of heresy.

1. Heresy comes from "Airesis" and it means faction, discord.
2. Paul is here referring to the second charge given against him in verse 5.
3. But this so-called "heresy" is not a deviation from Judaism but it is an extension of it. He is referring to the coming of the next dispensation. So who is a heretic? He is none other than those who refuse to realize that the Jewish Age is over and that the Church Age has started. This is what the Jew was not willing to recognize and the Jew was the real heretic, not Paul.

4. Paul turned the table on the Jews by claiming that they had profaned their own spiritual heritage. Paul said, "I haven't profaned the temple--they have." And this is the whole emphasis of the book of Hebrews. The age of Israel was over but they wouldn't recognize it.
5. The Old Testament Scriptures are shadows, pointing to Christ the reality.
6. Judaism, as represented here by Paul's accusers, recognizes the Old Testament Scriptures, so they therefore should recognize Jesus Christ, for the Old Testament Scriptures recognize him as the Saviour. Now that is the whole issue in this trial. Paul had accepted Christ on the Damascus Road, but they had refused to accept Christ. So Paul has turned the accusation around and he is saying, "No, I am not the guilty one, you are the ones who are guilty, for in reality you do not recognize Jesus Christ as the Son of God." So, in substance, Paul is saying--
  - a. You started the riot.
  - b. You are the ones behind the revolution. (In a way, Paul was here serving as a prophet, for in 66 A.D. they would start a revolution against Rome and a bitter struggle would go on between the Jews and Rome and in August of 70 A.D. the Jews would have a million slaughtered and over 100,000 would be taken captive. So the Jews were the ones who were behind the revolution.)
  - c. You profane the temple, because you keep on with the animal sacrifices and will not accept Christ.

So Paul had turned the table on them and has claimed that this is his evidence that they are guilty. Paul said, "I worship the God of my fathers" and this is Jesus Christ. Paul stated that he believed in the Old Testament Scriptures. So they were the heretics, not Paul.

ACTS 24:15 "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Now Paul stated that he agreed with one group of them, namely the Pharisees, concerning the resurrection. They believed in the resurrection and so did Paul. The word "allow" here should be translated "accept" and it comes from "pros dechomai." It means to receive face to face

ACTS 24:16 "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." The word is not "exercise" but "Exert himself to the utmost." It means maximum exertion. Paul here used the word "conscience." This is the norm or standard in his mind which is based on Bible doctrine. Paul is here stating that since he is right toward God and man, that he couldn't be guilty of the things they have charged against him.

In our next study we will go into the facts Paul will use to show that it was impossible for him to be guilty of the things they have charged, Tertullus had fabricated in his presentation, but Paul stayed with the facts.