

Ouachita Baptist University

Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita

Vaught Sermon Notes: A Study of the Book of Acts

W.O. Vaught Archive

12-14-1983

Righteousness and Temperance and Judgment to Come

W. O. Vaught

Ouachita Baptist University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/vn_acts



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), and the [Liturgy and Worship Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vaught, W. O., "Righteousness and Temperance and Judgment to Come" (1983). *Vaught Sermon Notes: A Study of the Book of Acts*. 116.

https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/vn_acts/116

This Sermon Notes is brought to you for free and open access by the W.O. Vaught Archive at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Vaught Sermon Notes: A Study of the Book of Acts by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TEMPERANCE AND JUDGMENT TO COME

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS
NUMBER 123
ACTS 24:22-27

Dr. W. O. Vaught, Jr.
Immanuel Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

ACTS 24:22-27 "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. 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. 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. 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. 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. But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound."

Here in this passage we will see how some of the most important people in the Roman Empire heard the truth of the gospel. Felix and Drusilla were very important people in the Roman Empire.

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." "Felix knowing more accurately of that way" is just another way of saying that Felix had been exposed to Christianity. "He deferred them" is just another way of saying that he adjourned the court. He put off making any decision until Lysias came up from Jerusalem. Now actually Felix didn't expect Lysias to come up from Jerusalem and give any more facts about Paul. Felix simply was using this as an excuse to hold Paul hoping that he would get a bribe out of him. So Felix will leave Paul in prison, and when later he goes to Rome Felix will still leave him in prison hoping thus to curry favor with the Jews. There is no record that Lysias ever came up from Jerusalem, and though other hearings were given Paul, for all intents and purposes the trial was over. So the expediency of Felix kept Paul in bonds. But God did not allow the folly of Felix or the craftiness of the Jews to upset his plan for Paul's life. God's plan is never hindered by tragedies brought on by evil men. God's plan always goes marching right on. There are no set-backs or hindrances in the plan of God.

In this trial of Paul we notice that Roman law was fair and impartial. Roman law demanded that heresay not be accepted as facts. Let us remember that this is just as important in every day living as it is in a court of law. Every man is innocent until proven guilty and no man can be proven guilty on heresay.

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." So Paul was now being held unjustly. The word for "Keep" here is "Zereo" and it means to keep something that

belongs to you. Felix considered Paul as his greatest opportunity to get rich so he spoke of him as being his own possession. Felix considered Paul as a very valuable investment.

So Paul was not treated as a criminal but was turned over to a centurion and was placed in a house where his friends could come and visit him and could minister unto him. Felix could smell money and he wanted to keep every avenue open and make it possible for Paul to get his hands on the money to pay the bribe. Though under arrest, Paul was to have his liberty "Anasis" means to be in a relaxed state of confinement. It was a house arrest and an officer was always with him. The words "minister to him" means that Paul was to have kind treatment. Many of the soldiers employed by Felix were believers so he had many opportunities to hear the gospel message.

Let us look at this house arrest from another standpoint. Paul was facing some of the most strategic years of his life, so God gave him four years of quiet confinement and a vacation from the intense years like those of his missionary travels. During these years Paul would be on the inhale end of his ministry, and then in the exhale he would write down Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. These four years God used to prepare the mind of Paul for this great task. These books furnish for us the doctrine of the mystery and from them we learn about the task of the church and God's plan for the ages.

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." Felix had been sent to Caesarea to be the procurator of Judaea because he was such a thief. They tried to get him as far away from Rome as they could. One night at a party Felix saw Drusilla, who was then the wife of the Arabian King of Amesa. Felix persuaded the beautiful Drusilla to elope with him and marry him. He persuaded her that he would one day be the Emperor of Rome and she would become the highest lady in the Empire. Drusilla was so jealous of her more beautiful sister, Bernice, that she saw this as an opportunity to get ahead of her, so she eloped with Felix and became his wife. One day during one of their public appearances in Caesarea, Felix sent for Paul. Please notice that this is not a trial. Paul was invited to come to some sort of social gathering, and during that day Paul spent with him they heard about Christ.

Acts 24:25 "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." Please notice that Paul didn't pull any punches. He reasoned of righteousness, temperance and the judgment to come. The word for "reasoned" here is "dialegomai" and it means to teach Bible doctrine in a conversational tone. It means that they had a discussion and it lasted a long time and continued through different stages. At one time Paul would talk of righteousness. Now this refers to imputed righteousness, the kind of righteousness set forth in John 16:8-10. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;" Paul gave great emphasis to plus R--

the perfect righteousness of God. Now Felix and Drusilla were the type of characters that would cause most preachers to come forth with a sermon on morals. But please notice that Paul didn't talk to them about their immorality but he talked to them about the perfect righteousness of God. Paul explained to them that though they were great in their political position, the only way they could be great in the eyes of God was to have plus R, the perfect righteousness of God. In other words, he emphasized as few people do today, that in order to be saved one must accept the perfect righteousness which God provides through Jesus Christ. Now Paul didn't fail to emphasize that they were sinners, but he sat down with them and took a line of reasoning that explained the perfect righteousness of God. Paul explained that in order to live with God in eternity you must be as good as God is, and the only way to be as good as God is, is to accept the righteousness which God provides. So Paul that day kept on reasoning with them. And as Paul explained the perfect righteousness of God to them Felix trembled. Paul didn't have to outline to Felix his sins. Felix knew about his own sins far better than anyone else in the world, But when Paul painted the picture of God's perfect righteousness, Felix trembled for he saw his sins as he had never seen them before.

Now remember this--you have never seen a bad person who did not think he was good, at least in some points. Even wicked Felix and Drusilla thought they were great people, great in many ways. But when they saw the perfect righteousness of God for the first time, they really saw how bad they were, and they trembled. Now every person thinks that he has some strong points, some points of respectability..Now over against their so-called goodness Paul explained to them the perfect righteousness of God. He told them that how for millions of years before the world came to be God existed in perfection. Paul explained to them how God wanted to share his righteousness with them, and they trembled. "Dialegomai" the word here translated "reasoned" simply means that Paul in many different ways, using ever means at his command, explained to them the perfect righteousness of God. Keep in mind that he did this to two of the most wicked people in all the world. If you were to read those latin versions of the life story of Felix and Drusilla you would realize that it is equal to any pornography you can find anywhere on earth.

In the second place, he reasoned concerning temperance. But the word isn't temperance at all. It means inner stability.

Now, externally, Drusilla was about as beautiful as any woman that ever lived, but on the inside she was everything but beautiful. Her beauty was all on the outside. She left the King of Amesa to come and live with Felix. She did it to spite her sister. Now, of course, you can see that that is not a very worthy motive for matrimony. You see, Bernice, her sister, had married a King in Arabia who was over a bigger kingdom than Amesa. This caused Drusilla to be very jealous of Bernice and above everything she wanted to lord it over her more beautiful sister. Felix told Drusilla that he was a part of the establishment and that he and Pallas and Narcissus had the ear of the Emperor Caludius. He persuaded Drusilla that when Claudius left the throne, he would become Emperor and she would be the first lady of the Empire. So she bought his line and eloped with him and that is why she was in Caesarea at this time. Drusilla didn't love Felix, she married him because for once in her life she wanted to get even with her more beautiful sister. So Drusilla had

visions of becoming the Empress.

To digress just a moment, let me ask you a question. Are you trying to get even with someone? Are you trying to compete with someone? Where in the Word of God are you told that you should compete with another? This word "temperance" really means inner strength, and Paul directed this part of his message toward Drusilla. She was bitter and jealous and had bitter hatred for her sister Bernice, so Paul talked to her about inner strength and inner stability. At that present moment Drusilla was lording it over her sister Bernice. A little later on Bernice will outshine her and the battle between them will go on and on. That is why Paul talked to her about inner power, inner stability, inner peace. Indeed she was beautiful without, but she was hideous on the inside. She could be described with these words--"All vogue on the outside, all vague on the inside." You see you must inhale Bible doctrine in order to be able to exhale love. You have to take God in, in order to be able to give him out.

In the final part of his message Paul closed in on both Felix and Drusilla when he reasoned with them concerning "Judgment to come". He talked to them about the Great White Judgment throne. Paul must have said something about like this--"Felix and Drusilla, when this battle for power is over in the Roman Empire and these busy years have gone, just remember that there is a judgment day coming for all unbelievers. Drusilla, when this battle with your beautiful sister is over, and your beautiful body has faded into old age, just remember you have an appointment with God in the judgment. Both of you are going to take your misery right straight to the Great White Throne Judgment." No wonder we read that Felix, one of the greatest men in the Roman Empire, trembled.

The words translated trembled here are "Ginomai emphobos" and it means "to become inner fear". Fear filled him on the inside, and Felix became something that he had not been before. He was the proud wicked ruler of Judaea, but now he became a man filled with fear and therefore he trembled.

We read here that Felix said to Paul "Go thy way for this time" but he actually said "Get out of here. If I have some convenient season I will invite you to come back".

So Paul approached Felix with righteousness, and he approached Drusilla with temperance, and he warned them both of judgment to come.

Acts 24:26 "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." He was still waiting for that bribe. He sent for Paul often, not to talk with him again about righteousness and temperance and judgment to come, but hoping that Paul would have the bribe ready.

Acts 24:27 "But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound." Felix had many complaints made against him. The Jews rioted and Felix had many of them put to death. There was great unrest in the province, so much so, that Rome had to replace Felix. So Nero called Felix back to

Rome and sent Procius Festus in his place. Festus didn't have the same kind relationship with Paul. Festus wasn't interested in a bribe so Festus arrested Paul and placed him in a dungeon. Felix declined and was later deposed. Drusilla left him and went to the famous resort Pompeii, and there she and her son lost their lives when Pompeii was destroyed in the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D.

Felix and Drusilla rejected Christ and they were never the same again. They carried around their fear for the rest of their lives. Before Drusilla died her sister Bernice rose far above her and became the most powerful woman in the Empire, much to the disdain of Drusilla. They had their chance for salvation but they turned it down and they were never the same again. So they "left Paul bound."