

Audio Transcript of Sermon

February 13, 2021

Acts-Paul Defends Himself Before the Sanhedrin and the Governor

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. As we continue our study of the Book of Acts, we find Paul is detained by the authorities in Jerusalem facing the Sanhedrin. Having been trained by Gamaliel, Paul understood what the religious elite believed and knew how to leverage that information to benefit his situation. He understood their customs and practices that would be easily overlooked. In addressing the Sanhedrin, Paul explained how he was facing them with a good conscience before God. It was as Paul was sharing this with the Sanhedrin that Ananias, the high priest ordered that Paul be struck in the mouth. After feeling the sting of the physical action, Paul called Ananias a whited wall, inferring that Ananias was a hypocrite, who had violated the law. Acts twenty-three verse one.

Acts 23:1-10

- 1. And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.**
- 2. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.**
- 3. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?**

The portion of the law that Paul was referring to is not clear in the Book of Acts. We do know Paul was physically assaulted prior to the testimony of any witnesses, which was a requirement given in Leviticus, which required the testimony of not just one witness but multiple witnesses. Beyond a reasonable doubt, the standard used in the United States to find guilt in a criminal trial, required in ancient Israel and the law of Moses the testimony of at least two witnesses. A single witness was insufficient to meet the beyond a reasonable doubt standard. This same law established priests and judges who had authority to hear these charges and were required to vigorously question the witness, with one huge difference in the application of law. If this difference in standard were applied in the United States today, the criminal justice system would look significantly different than it is today. The difference in the law of Moses

Is that it understood that from time to time, there would be motivations to provide false testimony to bring a conviction against another person. The standard applied with the law of Moses was an equal application of punishment. In other words, a person could have been put to death under the law of Moses because of false testimony, then those who brought the false testimony would be put to death, not could be put to death, a consideration for punishment, but would be put to death, a certainty.

Imagine how that standard, if applied today, would change criminal prosecution. If a person was accused of committing murder, which depending on where you live and the circumstances of the crime could result in punishment up to and including the death penalty. Under today's rules, false testimony accusing of murder would not result in the same penalty. District attorneys, who can be politically motivated, and police, who can investigate to establish their premise of the crime rather than to follow the facts can be complicit in furthering false testimony. Imagine what would happen if the penalty for false testimony in police reports, testimony in trial, and police and prosecutorial misconduct was the same penalty originally sought for the defendant. When we look to who is incarcerated in this country today, we would understand that the application of the law of Moses that Paul was citing in his defense before the Sanhedrin, would likely change who is in prison today, disproportionately including minorities and people with disabilities. It would likely change the scope of the Innocence Project, which seeks to overturn convictions of people that is not supported by evidence.

Paul was well-versed in the law and knew his rights. He asserted these rights within the Sanhedrin. Leviticus nineteen verse fifteen.

Leviticus 19:15-21

15. One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.

16. If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong;

17. Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days;

18. And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother;

19. Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.

20. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.

21. And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

While asserting his rights from this passage in Leviticus, Paul was accused of reviling the high priest. Paul defended himself by acknowledging that he was aware of the requirement of the law stated in Exodus twenty-two verse twenty-eight, not to speak evil of a ruler. He stated that he was unaware that Ananias was high priest. While some priests, like Aaron, served for life, many of the high priests served a much shorter period of time. The governors of Judea appointed high priests who politically would be willing to work with Rome, which would explain why Paul stated he was unaware that Ananias was high priest. Acts twenty-three verse four.

Acts 23:4-10

4. And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

5. Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

As Paul considered the audience before him, he realized that some were Sadducees and the others Pharisees and that they held divergent views on scripture. Paul intended to use their differences against them. He knew Sadducees did not believe in life after death, nor did they believe in a spirit world beyond God. Pharisees believe in a resurrection and spirit world. Paul honestly shared that he was a Pharisee born of a Pharisee. Some of the scribes who were there, also Pharisees claimed it would be unjust to take any action against Paul, because an angel may have spoken to Paul and that they would be on dangerous ground if they took action because they could be fighting against God. The debate became so intense that the Roman captain feared violence would overtake the assembly bringing harm to Paul, a Roman citizen, entitled to protection of law. The captain had Paul returned to the garrison. Verse six.

6. But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the

son of a Pharisee: 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.

10. And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.

Facing the Sanhedrin, Paul had a full set of options of how to respond and defend himself. In a way, he side-stepped the complaint by knowingly and purposefully stating that he was a Pharisee understanding there would be the dispute between the Sadducees and Pharisees. In his response, Paul did not lie, nor did he misrepresent who he was. He used circumstances of society and this external debate between Pharisees and Sadducees to benefit his situation. While we can't tell from the passage, Paul probably knew the debate on the resurrection from the dead and the spirit world was very intense between the two groups. He already had an idea that the Roman soldiers knew they were bound by law to protect his citizenship rights. Paul was playing a chess match and likely was hoping for a situation that would require his removal from the Sanhedrin.

In the situations we face in life, there may be times when it is useful for us to be mindful of disputes and situations between others that may benefit us. This shows it is important to remember while we are not to be consumed by the evil of this world, we do live in this world and our knowledge of how this world works is useful as we live our lives looking forward to the Kingdom of God.

Prior to His death, Jesus warned the disciples that in the end time, followers of Jesus would be persecuted, brought before religious and civil tribunals, and just like Paul was given an opportunity to provide testimony, so we will be given the same opportunity. Knowing that we live in the end time and persecution is

foretold, a normal reaction would be to prepare our response. Jesus tells us NOT to prepare a response, because the words we will give in testimony will be inspired by the Holy Spirit. The words that are given to us by the Holy Spirit will be so incredibly wise, that those who persecute us will be unable to deny what we have said, nor will they be able to find any basis to oppose what we said. Jesus adds that many will hate us including those closest to us. Jesus tells us that while some will face death, if we let the Holy Spirit speak for when we are before these tribunals, we will be protected, and it is through patience, the Greek word, *hupomone*, enduring to the end, that we will save our life. We can never allow the threat of harm to us to cause us to deny Jesus and this incredible calling we have. Luke chapter twenty-one verse twelve.

Luke 21:12-19

12. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.

13. And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

14. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:

15. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

16. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

17. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

18. But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

19. In your patience possess ye your souls.

In troubling circumstances it can be easy to forget that in our life, we have God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Paul in writing to the Colossians warns us to be wary of philosophy and vain deceit, which follow the traditions of men rather than the teachings of Jesus. Even in the most trying of circumstances, we need to remember that it is through Jesus we have access to God the Father. Colossians chapter two verse eight.

Colossians 2:8-10

8. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

9. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

10. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

As we move forward in the faith, Paul tells us to avoid foolish questions and genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law. While these debates may be intellectually stimulating, these do very little for helping us grow closer to Jesus Christ and God the Father. We are further told to avoid people who focus on these debates and need to be aware that these people are considered to be a heretic, and the Greek word for heretic implies one who creates a schism, seeks to divide. Debate can cause division as people take sides in a matter, and when spiritual situations are presented with the intent of causing division, we need to ask ourselves if this is of God or of Satan. Paul tells us that people who seek to cause division condemn themselves.

In the Bible there are important concepts presented to us and we know from second Timothy three verses sixteen and seventeen that all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works. If our study and conversation about the Bible is not leading us to perfection, to obedience, to love, we need to examine if we are instead being led to division through our study. Others will try to divide us. We cannot do their work for them. Titus three verse nine.

Titus 3:9-11

9. But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

10. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

11. Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

There is a difference in having the faith of Jesus Christ and God the Father and having knowledge of Jesus Christ and God the Father. With knowledge, there is awareness of the truth, but no commitment to the truth. In James chapter two verse nineteen we are told the demons also believe and tremble. The demons and Satan long ago abandoned the faith and their commitment to the faith.

Our faith cannot be a faith consumed with the meaning of words, because when all we can do is debate what a word means, Paul tells us we are at the root of what will cause spiritual division with the church. Being able to intellectually argue a point does not make any person a godly person. Godliness is not defined by debate but by contentment. Having contentment is what will lead to our greatest spiritual growth. Disagreements over the meaning of words is a root of spiritual division. Close to it is the root of evil, the love of money, which can cause people to leave the faith. First Timothy six verse one.

1 Timothy 6:1-16

- 1. Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.**
- 2. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.**
- 3. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;**
- 4. He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,**
- 5. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.**
- 6. But godliness with contentment is great gain.**
- 7. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.**
- 8. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.**
- 9. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.**
- 10. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.**

Instead of debate over the meaning of words, instead of having a love of money, we are to follow righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. We are to fight the good fight of faith so that we can lay hold of eternal life. Fighting that good fight of faith does not mean debating over the meaning of words and pursuing wealth. That good fight of faith is not with other believers over the

meaning of words or of the pursuit of money. This good fight of faith involves responding to those who like Satan, accuse us. Jesus fought the good fight of faith against Pontius Pilate knowing it was appointed for him to die. Jesus did not fight the good fight of faith against the disciples. Paul had to face the Sanhedrin and fought for the faith there. He did not fight against the brethren.

We need to focus and be led by the Holy Spirit so when we defend the faith we have been given, our testimony is without spot so that even our accusers cannot deny what has been said. We know from what Jesus taught his disciples, this will come through faith as we are led by the Holy Spirit, not by knowledge, not by disputes over words. Verse eleven.

11. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

12. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

13. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

14. That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

15. Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

16. Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

James tells us how to know if a person is being led by the Holy Spirit or selfish self-interest. He tells us not all who appear wise who appear to have knowledge actually have wisdom and knowledge. He tells us not to look to the words that are spoken but by the actions that are taken. Our actions as a Christian, everything we do, need to be based in meekness of wisdom. What we do cannot be based on jealousy and debate. When we act based on jealousy and debate it's as if we lie against the truth. When we act based on jealousy and debate it leads to confusion and other forms of evil. We are to sow the fruit of righteousness which is never sown through jealousy and debate and is always sown in peace. When Jesus said blessed are the peacemakers, this included those who sow the fruit of righteousness in peace. James three verse thirteen.

James 3:13-18

13. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

16. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

17. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

The fruit of righteousness that James wrote about is foolishness to this world. As we think about our calling and how we may be required to give an account for our beliefs, we need to remember that our way of life doesn't make sense to most of the people we encounter, and we know that even though what we believe and how we act is considered foolish by many, our calling will lead us to salvation through Jesus Christ.

What we believe, we believe in faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he shared how the Jews sought a sign and the Greeks sought wisdom, and these are the two manners by which most people have what they think of as faith. To many, their concept of faith involves being reassured of God's presence through signs or being able to logically or intelligently proving their viewpoint. Instead of these practices, we are told to believe, to have faith, to hold fast to that which we hope for yet have not yet seen. It is with this different mindset that God is able to work spiritually with us and there is no mistaking this very mindset has been used in the creation of the many human-made marvels of our life. These inventors of our modern conveniences are not considered people of faith, but visionaries. Most people use a smart phone and tablet. Fifteen years ago these did not exist and came about because one person believed there would be a need for these. In the pandemic many have received online orders, and thirty years ago the idea of ordering online was a novelty with the major online fulfillment giants of today yet to be established, and these came about because of the vision of one person.

It makes no difference what that vision is and when people act with vision, they use many similar processes related to faith. How much more can we accomplish by believing, having faith in Jesus Christ and God the Father as we are led by the Holy Spirit? The weakest part of God is stronger than these business and technological accomplishments of our time, and through belief, through faith, we can accomplish much, much more. First Corinthians one verse eighteen.

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

18. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

19. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

20. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

21. For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

23. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

24. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Going back to the Book of Acts, we find Paul at the garrison and Jesus came to Paul at night and told him to maintain his confidence because Jesus would have him testify in Rome. Paul knew with these words that nothing would harm him in Jerusalem or his travels to Rome. The next day when a group of more than forty Jews banded together and vowed to kill Paul before they ate or drank and shared this vow with the chief priests and elders, it created quite a stir in Jerusalem, and when Paul heard of this plot, he would have known that no harm would come to him by this group because Jesus had already told him he would go to Rome.

It was Paul's nephew who heard of the plot and told Paul about this. Paul then had him share the information with the garrison soldiers. The plot was very simple. The chief priests would ask the garrison commander to bring Paul to

testify before them and he would be killed by the group while headed to testify. Acts twenty-three verse eleven.

Acts 23:11-35

11. And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

12. And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

13. And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

14. And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

15. Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

16. And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

17. Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

18. So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

19. Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me?

20. And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

21. But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

22. So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

The garrison commander, Claudius Lysias, heard this threat and believed what he heard from Paul's nephew. He probably was able to sense from Paul's prior testimony there was hatred of Paul. He also knew he had to protect the rights of a Roman citizen, and leading a Roman citizen to that citizen's assassination would not be protecting citizenship rights. The commander felt the best option was to remove Paul from Jerusalem and ordered that he be taken by military escort to Caesarea, with Paul protected by two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen and would leave at nine p.m. Paul was to ride to Caesarea on an animal and be taken to Felix the governor along with a letter written by the garrison commander. Verse twenty-three.

23. And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

24. And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.

25. And he wrote a letter after this manner:

In the letter, the garrison commander explained to Felix that Paul had been taken by the Jews and would have killed him. He went on to explain that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he worked with the religious tribunal and had Paul testify. He observed that the complaints against Paul were a matter of religion and not violations of Roman law for which Paul could be punished. He added that when he found out that when he was told of a plot to assassinate Paul, that Paul was sent to him for protection. He explained that those with grievances against Paul were told they would need to bring them up with the governor. Verse twenty-six.

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.

The soldiers and Paul departed the garrison headed to Caesarea and by daybreak arrived at Antipatris, a city between Jerusalem and Caesarea, and closer to Caesarea. Antipatris had been established by Herod the Great, named in honor of his father. Today the location of Antipatris is a national park within Israel and historically was strategic because of a water spring in the area. Once they came to Antipatris, the foot soldiers and spearmen returned to Jerusalem, and the horsemen continued with Paul to Caesarea. Felix, Marcus Antonius Felix, was the governor of Judea from about AD 52 to AD 59, giving us a time frame of when this happened. We'll find out that Paul was held for two years prior to the next governor being appointed, putting the dates closer to AD 57. Unlike Paul who was a citizen from birth, Felix was a freedman, who was given his citizenship. Felix asked Paul where he was from and understood he was from Cilicia. He told Paul he would hear his side of the story when Paul's accusers came, and Paul was ordered to stay at the judgement hall, which would have consisted of a palace and military barracks. Verse thirty-one.

31. Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.

32. On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:

33. Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

34. And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;

35. I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

Five days later, Ananias the high priest, came with elders and Tertullus, a lawyer, who would argue their case before Felix. Like many lawyers, Tertullus began his legal presentation by thanking Felix, who was the judge, and acknowledging all that Felix had done for the people of Judea. He then launched into his attack of Paul claiming that Paul was acting in sedition against the government as part of a small religious group, and also attacked the established religious faith at the temple. They were painting Paul to be a rebel who could be held accountable under Jewish law and acknowledged that the garrison commander had taken away that possibility. The Jews who listened to Tertullus agreed with what he had just said. Acts twenty-four verse one.

Acts 24:1-27

- 1. And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.**
- 2. And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,**
- 3. We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.**
- 4. Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.**
- 5. For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:**
- 6. Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.**
- 7. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands,**
- 8. Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.**
- 9. And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.**

The prosecution rested and it was time for Paul to defend himself, and similar to Tertullus, Paul also praised Felix expressing confidence that Felix would fairly hear the complaint brought against Paul as well as Paul's defense. Paul explained he had been in Jerusalem for twelve days, and he went there to worship. During his entire time in Jerusalem, not once was he observed to debate religion at the temple, not once was he observed to debate religion at a synagogue, nor was he observed to debate in public. He explained that the charge of sedition that they leveled against him could not be proven and that the religious heresy of which he was accused, involved worshipping the same God they worshipped adhering to what was written in scripture.

He explained he had hope of a resurrection and future judgment of the just and unjust, and that even some of his accusers had thus similar hope, that this hope was tolerated by the Jewish faith. Verse ten.

10. Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

11. Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.

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:

13. Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

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:

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.

Paul explained he had a good conscience believing he had done nothing to offend God or man. After an absence from Jerusalem of several years, he returned to Jerusalem to help people in need and to provide offerings at the temple. He explained while going through a purification ritual at the temple, he was noticed by Jews and when he was noticed by the Jews he was not with a large group nor was he creating a disturbance. He offered that those people as witnesses to his actions should be there to provide testimony and that the only reason he was on trial was because of his belief in the resurrection of the dead, which he previously explained was a hope allowed by Jewish law. Verse sixteen.

16. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

17. Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

18. Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

19. Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.

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.

Felix thanked both parties for their testimony and explained he would question the garrison commander on the need to refer this matter to the governor. He directed the centurion that Paul was to remain at the judgment hall and would be able to have visitors of Paul's choosing and discretion. Verse twenty-two.

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.

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.

Paul was a novelty at the judgment hall and days after the hearing, Felix and his wife, Drusilla, who was a Jew had Paul brought to them so they could hear more about the faith of Jesus Christ. Felix trembled as he heard Paul speak probably because he understood he would not measure up to the requirements of faith. He dismissed Paul and while Paul was being held was hoping to be bribed to let Paul go. He had Paul room with repeat offenders and after two years when Porcius Festus became governor, Paul remained under house arrest. Verse twenty-four.

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.

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

Porcius Festus was thought to be governor from about AD 59 to AD 62. Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.