

Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 162

Sha'ul's Appears Before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa ~ Part 1

Note: To examine the graphics in this series, click on them for a pop-up version.

We continue in the **Book of Acts. Sha'ul's Appears to the Roman Authorities** beginning in Acts 24:1.

Background

At **Caesarea**, **Sha'ul** has three opportunities to present his defense and to preach the **Gospel** to the **Roman** authorities who hold him under arrest. The first appearance is before **Felix**, the **Governor and Procurator of Judea**. **Felix** had been appointed initially by **Claudius Caesar** and then confirmed by **Claudia's** successor, Nero. **Felix's** wife, **Drusilla**, who is mentioned in Luke, is the daughter of Herod Agrippa I and sister of Herod **Agrippa II**, before whom **Sha'ul** will also appear. **Felix** knows enough about "The Way" to realize that there is no substance to the charges being brought against **Sha'ul**, and **Luke's** account hints that **Felix** is even somewhat troubled by **Sha'ul's** teaching. But he is primarily motivated by greed and, therefore, is angered when **Sha'ul** fails to offer a bribe. **Luke's** record notes that **Sha'ul** is forced to remain in jail for two years, at the end of which **Felix** is removed from office.

Felix is succeeded by **Porcius Festus**, about whom little is known. **Festus** also finds no fault in **Sha'ul** and suggests that **Sha'ul** once again be taken before the **Sanhedrin** in **Yerushalayim**. But **Sha'ul** exercises his rite as a **Jewish Roman** citizen and appeals his case to **Caesar**.

Shortly after his appeal, **Festus** is visited by King Herod **Agrippa II** and his sister Bernice. When Festus expresses frustration regarding **Sha'ul's** case, **Agrippa** asks if he can hear **Sha'ul's** story for himself. **Sha'ul** summarizes his personal conversion and subsequent ministry for **Agrippa**. At the conclusion of his discourse, **Luke** relates a memorable conversion between **Agrippa** and **Sha'ul** in which **Agrippa** appears to be uncomfortably vulnerable to the **Gospel** message. But there is no historical record that he did accept **Yeshua** as his **Savior**. ¹

Indictment Against Sha'ul ²

24 ¹ *After five days, the Cohen HaGadol Hananyah came down with some elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they presented their case against Sha'ul to the governor. ² Sha'ul was called, and Tertullus began to make the charges: "Felix, your Excellency, it is because of you that we enjoy unbroken peace, and it is your foresight that has brought to this nation*

It was customary to begin a presentation in court with a compliment, in this case, flattery so excessive as to contradict the facts.

³ so many reforms in so many areas. It is with the utmost gratitude that we receive this. ⁴ But, in order not to take up too much of your time, I beg your indulgence to give us a brief hearing.

⁵ "We have found this man a pest. He is an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world and a ringleader of the sect of the Natzratim.

¹ The Narrated Bible in Chronological Order by F. LaGard Smith.

² This occurs in 58 CE.

Tertullus presents the accusation against Sha'ul briefly but not well. Being a **pest** is hardly an indictable crime.

6 He even tried to profane the Temple, but we arrested him.

The **Jews** thought he had done so (Acts 21:28), but by this time, even his accusers realized he had not. Attempting profane of the **Temple** is a reduced charge. **We arrested him.** This is a gross understatement—they wanted to lynch him.

⁷ [Some manuscripts include verses 6b–8a: *We wanted to try him under our own law, ⁷ but Lysias the commander intervened. He took him out of our hands by force ⁸ and ordered his accuser to appear before you.*]

Even in the manuscripts that provide this additional information, **Tertullus** avoids mentioning why **Lysias**, the commander, intervened, namely, to save **Sha'ul** from the plot on his life (23:12–24).

⁸ **By questioning this man yourself, you will be able to learn all about the things of which we are accusing him.**⁹ **The Judeans also joined in the accusation and alleged that these were the facts.**

³

In our next post, we continue to learn about **Sha'ul's Appearances Before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa.**

³ Acts 24:1-9