

# The Spirit speaks -- selectively

... for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute      Luke 21:15

## Study 25a: PAUL'S THIRD APOLOGIA (24:10-21)

### 24:10-15 Itemize Paul's bridge-building topics

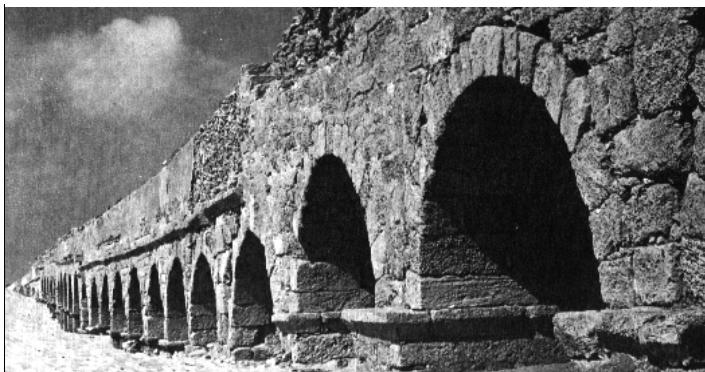
(1) The adjective can equally be rendered by "my fathers" or "our fathers," but St. Paul's aim is to shew that he has not severed himself from the ancestral faith of the whole nation, and so his thought would include himself with them ... The Apostle thus testifies to his complete acceptance of all the Jewish Scriptures. **J.R. Lumby** *The Acts of the Apostles* p.329

(2) It is not without reason that Luke records this declaration of the apostle's faith in the Old Testament Scriptures. The very wonder which the statement excites shows the need of preserving it in the history. For those who stumble at it must have supposed that in some sense Paul's teaching ran counter to that of Moses. It does not, and this expressed belief of the apostle is needed testimony to the value of the Old Testament. **J.M. Stifler** *Acts* p.238

(3) It seems as if the Jews and Gentiles were beginning to change places as the guardians of the church, a transposition afterward brought out in terrible relief at the destruction of Jerusalem, where Titus was as temperate and humane as the Zealots were ferocious to themselves and others. This circumstance imparts new interest to the crisis which we have now reached, and in which Paul begins his third Apology, or Apostolical defence of Christianity and of himself, not uttered like the first, to a vast crowd of Jews from all parts of the world assembled to observe the feast of Pentecost; nor like the second, in the presence of the Sanhedrim or Eldership of Israel; but before a Roman magistrate, and under the protection and restraint of Roman arms, yet in the presence of the High Priest and a deputation of the Elders, so that he was still appealing to the chosen people, and before these Gentile witnesses attempting, for the last time, to convince them of the true relation between Law and Gospel, Christ and Moses. **J.A. Alexander** *The Acts of the Apostles* p.359

### 24:16-18 How does Paul's conscience deal with temple worship and sacrifice?

(4) The general charges brought against his conduct 'throughout the



Roman-built aqueduct near Caesarea brought water from the north

world' (24:5) were certainly not true of his behaviour in Jerusalem. Paul had gone there in order to worship. He had not come to Jerusalem to evangelize; by the terms of the agreement in Galatians 2:7-9 he would not have engaged in evangelism in Jerusalem unless invited to do so by the Jerusalem church. *Worship* will mean offering thanks in the temple. The earlier narrative certainly implies this, and it need cause no historical or theological difficulties; the Jerusalem church appears to have continued to make use of the temple, just as Christians generally worshipped in the synagogues until they were made positively unwelcome. **I. Howard Marshall** *The Acts of the Apostles* p.377

(5) This is the clearest reference in Acts -- indeed, we may say the only reference -- to the collection which Paul had organized in the Gentile churches as a gift to the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem. He obviously attached great importance to it: in his eyes it was a proper acknowledgment on the part of the Gentile Christians of the

debt they owed to Jerusalem, from which the gospel had started on its progress to them, and he also hoped that it might arouse in the Jerusalem church -- especially in its extreme Judaistic members -- a sense of gratitude to the Gentile churches which would help to weld both into a spiritual unity. In this last respect the collection achieved at best only partial success. **F.F. Bruce** *Book of the Acts* p.470

### 24:19-21 What principle of the Law does Paul uphold? (Deut.17:6; 19:15)

(6) ... the people who had raised the hue and cry in the first instance, claiming to be eyewitnesses of his alleged temple-profanation, had not troubled to appear. It may be that the Sanhedrin thought it best that the Asian Jews should not appear, as cross-examination would soon have revealed the hollowness of their charges, and a Roman judge would not look lightly upon people who wasted his time with unfounded accusations. **F.F. Bruce** op. cit., p.470

## Study 25b: 'IT WILL TURN OUT FOR YOU A TESTIMONY' (24:22-25:12)

### 24:22-27 The procrastination of Felix allows Paul to witness on which subjects connected with faith?

(7) Evidently Paul dwelt on that side of his gospel which Felix as a non-Jew could best understand -- and which, as a man, he then most needed -- viz. its stern demand for moral reformation. If he had only recently wronged Drusilla's former husband, his conscience would be unusually sensitive to such teaching. **J. Vernon Bartlet** *Acts* p.357

(8) These must have been trying years for Paul. Luke, we believe,

spent the time collecting material for his two books. Possibly he produced the first draft of his Gospel during this period, and he may have put together the "travel document" (the "we sections") and roughed out the first part of Acts. He had access to his sources and time to do the work. **W.S. LaSor** *Church Alive* p.344

### 25:1-5 How are the 'Jews' doing on their fast?

(9) The zealous forty who had been frustrated in an earlier plot to assassinate Paul -- or others who emulated their zeal -- might find a

better opportunity on the road from Caesarea to Jerusalem. **F.F. Bruce** *op. cit.*, p.475

(10) Little did these men think that the eye of God was upon them, and that what they said and wrote was noted so that it has been scanned by centuries and will meet them at that resurrection of which their prisoner preached. **J.M. Stifler** *op. cit.*, p.246

## 25:6-12 How has Christ fulfilled His promise to Paul? (9:15,16)

(11) To us who know Nero's record in relation to Roman Christianity, it may seem strange that Paul should have appealed with such confidence to him. But, whatever Nero's personal character might be, the first five years of his reign (A.D. 54-59), when the imperial administration was carried on under the influence of his tutor Seneca, the Stoic philosopher, and Afranius Burrus, the honest prefect of the

praetorian guard, were looked back upon as a miniature Golden Age. There was little in A.D. 59 that gave warning of the events of A.D. 64.

**F.F. Bruce** *op. cit.*, p.479

(12) Now let us look at these events in the light of the Divine activity. Paul was being transferred from Hebrew to Roman influence and surroundings. Already he was moving, though apparently with great slowness, toward Rome itself. It is not easy to see the sequence. There came a critical moment almost immediately Felix had gone, when Festus arrived, and Paul used the Roman formula: "I appeal unto Caesar." It is easy to understand the trial of his faith at this time. Two years had gone, years in which a vacillating and corrupt judge had often talked to him, hoping to obtain a bribe from him; years which had apparently done nothing to give him any hope of release. Yet all the while we see by the overruling of his Lord and Master this man was moving into the Roman influence and atmosphere and approaching the hour of that appeal which would issue in his coming to Rome. **G. Campbell Morgan** *Acts* p.394

# Preaching judgment to the profane

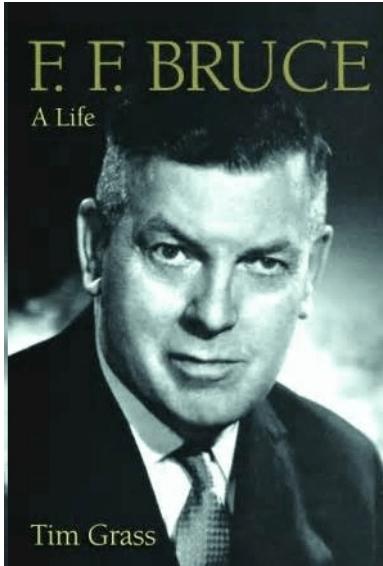
(13) [On Felix] Through all cruelty and licentiousness he exercised the authority of a king with the spirit of a slave.

**Tacitus Annals**

(14) According to the Western text, it was Drusilla who was specially anxious to have an interview with Paul. Drusilla was the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I, and at this time (A.D. 57) was not yet twenty years old. As a small girl she had been betrothed to the crown prince of Commagene, in eastern Asia Minor, but the marriage did not take place, because the prospective bridegroom refused to embrace Judaism. Then her brother Agrippa II gave her in marriage to the king of Emesa, a petty state in Syria (modern Homs). But when she was still only sixteen, Felix, with the help of a Cypriote magician called Atomos, persuaded her to leave her husband and marry him. She thus became Felix's third wife, and bore him a son named Agrippa, who met his death in the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79. Felix and Drusilla, then, sent for Paul and listened as he expounded the Christian faith. But he made it clear that the Christian faith had ethical implications, and as he talked about these, Felix and Drusilla felt that the interview had taken an uncomfortably personal turn. **F.F. Bruce** *op. cit.*, p.472

(15) It was to be no barren faith which St Paul commended, but was to have its fruits in the life. Felix perhaps expected

some philosophical dissertation on the subject of the resurrection, and the life after death ... It can hardly be conceived that St. Paul was ignorant of the character of those to whom he was speaking. Felix had been in office long enough to be well known. And the Apostle's themes were exactly those by which he could find the joints in the governor's harness. Of "righteousness" his life's history shews no trace, and for temperance, i.e. self-control, the presence of Drusilla by his side proved that he had no regard. Well might such a man be full of fear at the thought, as St Paul would urge it home, of the judgment after death. But the influence of his terror passed away, for we do not read that the Apostle ever beheld such signs of penitence as led him to quiet the terror, by preaching Christ as the atonement for sin. **J.R. Lumby** *op. cit.*, p.334



(16) ... the man trembled. That was gracious emotion. Had he but known it, his terror was the demonstration of the Divine tenderness. It created his opportunity ... If this man had but climbed upon his terror to truth. But he put it away, and the end of the story is that of a man entirely hardened ... But vacillation, the postponement to tomorrow, or to a more convenient season, means hardening; and hardness of heart is more hopeless than profligacy, than drunkenness, or adultery, or lust. **G. Campbell Morgan** *op. cit.*, p.397