

Righteousness, Self-Control, and the Judgment

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Acts 24:24-26

1. After Paul's initial defense before Felix, he had a second opportunity to speak to him and his 19 year old wife, Drusilla, of the Way (of faith in Jesus Christ).

B. The apostle Paul's Prospects

1. Marcus Antonius Felix, born between 10 AD, was the Roman procurator of Judaea Province 52-58 AD, succeeding Ventidius Cumanus.
 - a. Felix was the younger brother of Marcus Antonius Pallas, who served as a secretary of the treasury of Emperor Claudius. Felix became the procurator by the petition of his brother.
 - b. Felix's cruelty, licentiousness, and penchant for bribes led to a rapid increase of crime in Judaea. The period of his rule was marked by internal feuds and disturbances, which he put down with excessive violence
 - c. He was recalled to Rome, accused of using a dispute between the Jews and Syrians of Caesarea as a pretext to murder and plunder the locals, but through the intercession of his brother, Pallas, who had influence with the Emperor Nero, he escaped unpunished. Porcius Festus succeeded him as procurator.
 - d. Felix married three times. His first wife was Drusilla of

Mauretania the Elder, daughter of Cleopatra Selene II, and sister to Ptolemy of Mauretania. Drusilla of Mauretania the Elder is not the same person as her niece, Drusilla of Mauretania the Younger, daughter of her brother Ptolemy. Felix' second wife was Drusilla of Judea, 28 years younger, daughter of Herod Agrippa I & Cypros. Drusilla of Judea divorced Gaius Julius Azizus, King of Emesa to marry him. Felix and the Judean Drusilla, had a son, Marcus Antonius Agrippa, who died along with this Drusilla and many of the inhabitants of Pompeii and Herculaneum in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius on August 24, 79. Felix married a third time, but little is known about that wife.

- e. Felix and Drusilla were quite familiar with the Law of Moses
2. Drusilla (38 AD) was a daughter of Herod Agrippa I and sister to Bernice, Mariamne, and Herod Agrippa II. She perished in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79.
 - a. She was six years of age when her father had betrothed her to Gaius Julius Archelaus Antiochus Epiphanes, first son of King Antiochus IV, with a stipulation that Epiphanes should embrace the Jewish religion. He refused to become a Jew, so they separated, and Drusilla went to live in her sister Bernice's court
 - b. At the age of 14, Felix (42) saw her in her sister Bernice's home and thought she was beautiful. They were married after Simon Atomos Cypriot, a professed magician, persuaded her to divorce her first husband.
 - c. She was 19 years old when she and Felix sat with Paul.

I. RIGHTEOUSNESS

- A. God's righteousness conferred to humankind - Rom. 3:21-26 (If one is going to understand what Paul taught a Romanized Greek politician and his Romanized Jewish wife, that he consider what Paul taught about salvation to the mixed crowd of believers in the book of Romans)
 - 1. Paul reasoned about God's plan of righteousness in saving us:
 - a. Through faith in Jesus Christ
 - b. Offered to all sinners who believe, from a Paul to a Felix
 - c. Because all are sinners, justification will be by grace
 - d. It will be in and through Christ alone that redemption will come
 - 2. Manifests God's own righteousness as the One Who is Just within Himself, and the One Who makes others just
- B. Our righteousness given by God
 - 1. We are made righteous in Christ, according to God's righteousness - Rom. 3:21-26. How does this take place?
 - 2. In baptism, we die to sin that we might rise from dying to sin to walk in a new life without sin - Rom. 6:1-4
 - 3. In dying to sin, we are made free from sin and its consequences live with Christ and as Christ - Rom. 6:5-11
 - 4. Since this is the case, we must rule over sin and choose to live as instruments of righteousness - Rom. 6:12-14
- C. As Paul spoke of righteousness to them, perhaps their consciences were uneasy over their disregard for God's law on marriage - Mal. 2:14-16

II. SELF-CONTROL

- A. Before conversion, we had no reason, purpose, nor strength to live righteously because we were sold under sin - Rom. 7:14-20; John 8:34
 - 1. The law of sin wages war against the law of one's mind, resulting in slavery to sin - Rom. 7:21-24
 - 2. Outside of Christ, there is not only no hope, there is no help
 - 3. Self-control is beyond the reach of sinners outside of Christ
- B. After conversion, there is no condemnation, and there is now freedom from sin
 - 1. Rom. 8:1-4
 - 2. But only for those who live according to the Spirit, with minds set on the Spirit - Rom. 8:5-8
 - 3. By the Spirit, they put to death the deeds of the flesh. They have the purpose and power, the hope and the help to overcome sin.
 - a. Rom. 8:11-14; Eph. 3:16, 20-21
 - 4. Thus walking by the Spirit, they can produce the fruit of the Spirit, which includes self-control - Gal. 5:16-18, 22-23
- C. The power Felix and Drusilla enjoyed did not save their souls; it couldn't even save their physical lives

III. THE JUDGMENT

- A. The Day of Judgment is inevitable for believers and unbelievers alike; no one gets out of it - Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 14:9-12; 2Cor. 5:10

1. God chose someone who had lived and died as a man to judge men
- B. It is impossible to avoid the Judgment - 2Cor. 5:11; 2Thes. 1:7-9
 1. All of Felix and Drusilla's position and power could not keep them from the Judgment

IV. THE POINT

- A. It's not possible know exactly what Paul taught when he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment
 1. We do know the effect it had on Felix; first he was afraid - Acts 24:25
 2. Then he soothed his fear by postponing his decision
 3. Then, even though he heard Paul teach for years, he returned to his greedy, bribe taking self - Acts 24:26-27
- B. Where are you?
 1. Frightened by the Judgment?
 2. Temporarily eased by postponing the matter?
 3. Content to return to enslavement in sin?
- C. 2Cor. 6:1-2