

Paul's Appropriate Answer to Felix

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Introduction:

A. Antonius Felix and his brother Pallas were slaves who were freed by the mother of Emperor Claudius. They grew up with Prince Claudius, and when Claudius became emperor of Rome, these brothers were given powerful positions because they catered to his perversions. In A.D. 52 Antonius Felix became the governor of Judea and was stationed in Herod's palace in Caesarea.

B. According to the historian Tacitus, Felix was a master of cruelty and lust, who exercised the powers of a king with the spirit of a slave. The period in which he governed Judea, 52-59 A.D., was characterized by severe unrest and uprisings. During his reign Felix crucified thousands of people and was thoroughly hated by the Jews. As one given to power, glory, and pleasure, Felix would do anything for money.

C. Felix was married to a young woman named Drusilla, who was nineteen years old at the time of Paul's trial. Drusilla was the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I, the king who had killed the apostle James (Acts 12), and who, in turn, was killed by God in Caesarea (Acts 13). Drusilla's siblings included a brother, King Herod Agrippa II, a sister, Bernice, who accompanied their brother King Agrippa II to Caesarea (Acts 25-26), and another sister, Mariamne, who is not mentioned in the Bible.

D. Drusilla was born in Rome in A.D. 38 and was brought to Caesarea by her father, Herod Agrippa I. When she was fourteen years old, Drusilla was given in marriage by her brother to Azizus, king of Emesa in Syria. But Antonius Felix seduced Drusilla through a magician named Atomos and later married her when she was sixteen. Drusilla and Felix had one son, Agrippa, who perished when Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 A.D. at Pompeii. In A.D. 57, when she was nineteen, along with her husband Felix, Drusilla heard the gospel from the apostle Paul. Paul was brought to trial before Antonius Felix in the Praetorium of Herod's palace in Caesarea.

E. The members of the prosecution party

1. Ananias—the greedy, cruel, violent man who was high priest at the time
2. The elders from the Sanhedrin, mostly of the Sadducean party
3. A lawyer named Tertullus who was a professional orator, trained in Roman law and well-versed in Latin. Probably a Jew from the Diaspora, Tertullus was the spin doctor of his time. During Paul's trial, Tertullus displayed the utter contempt he had for Jesus and his followers

F. What did Felix do after Paul concluded his defense? Nothing. This corrupt judge knew that Paul was innocent, but he refused to declare a verdict which would have exonerated Paul and enabled him to go free.

1. Paul's innocence was attested to by many people, both before this trial and in subsequent trials. Felix had received a letter from the commander Claudius Lysias, proclaiming Paul's innocence - Acts 23:29
2. The Sanhedrin in Jerusalem proclaimed his innocence - Acts 23:9
3. Felix knew that Paul was innocent, but he did a criminal thing and refused to let him go free. Why? Felix was a greedy thief who was always looking for more money.
4. Acts 25:7, 18, 26:31-32

I. PAUL'S APPROPRIATE ANSWER TO FELIX

A. What do you say to a man, who:

1. Engaged in homosexual acts with Emperor Claudius
2. Was driven by abject greed and lust
3. Conspired with a deceitful magician to steal away another man's teenage wife and is living in adultery
4. Killed thousands unjustly by crucifixion
5. Solicited bribes as a judge
6. May have been the one man who equaled Caligula in evil

B. What would you say to such a man if you had only one opportunity?

1. Acts 24:20-26
2. Righteousness - The principles and requirements of justice and right, between God and man, and between man and his fellowmen in all relationships and interactions of life.
 - a. Felix will meet God who cannot be bribed - Deut. 10:17
3. Temperance - Chastity; self-control, and moderation with regard to a man's appetites, passions, and interests
 - a. Gal. 5:19-21
4. Judgment - The day of retribution, in which the unjust, intemperate, and indulgent must give account of all the deeds done in the body.
 - a. Rom. 14:11-12; 2Cor. 5:10
5. Precisely addressing Felix's specific needs.
 - a. Ez. 33:7-9