

Hope For All Seasons of Life

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Acts 24:1-27

Acts 24

Paul Before Felix at Caesarea

[1] And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a spokesman, one Tertullus. They laid before the governor their case against Paul. [2] And when he had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying:

“Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since by your foresight, most excellent Felix, reforms are being made for this nation, [3] in every way and everywhere we accept this with all gratitude. [4] But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly. [5] For we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. [6] He even tried to profane the temple, but we seized him. [8] By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him.”

[9] The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all these things were so.

[10] And when the governor had nodded to him to speak, Paul replied:

“Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense. [11] You can verify that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem, [12] and they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, either in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city. [13] Neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me. [14] But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, [15] having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. [16] So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man. [17] Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings. [18] While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or tumult. But some Jews from Asia—[19] they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, should they have anything against me. [20] Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, [21] other than this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: ‘It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.’”

Paul Kept in Custody

[22] But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, put them off, saying, “When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case.” [23] Then he gave orders to the

centurion that he should be kept in custody but have some liberty, and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs.

[24] After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. [25] And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, “Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you.” [26] At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. So he sent for him often and conversed with him. [27] When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison. (ESV)

Main Theme: The certainty of God’s redemptive activity in every season of life gives certain (confident, sure, definitive, ultimate, absolute) hope.

What was the basis of Paul's confidence and hope?

1. The Past

[14] But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, [15] having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. -- Acts 24:14–15

- Paul was certain of God’s truth, and it brought him certain hope.
- God is unchanging, and His truth and His purposes endure for all time

The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations. -- Psalm 33:11

2. The Present

- Paul’s hope was not only in the Lord’s redemptive activity in the past but in His redemptive activity in the present.

[And when the governor had nodded to him to speak, Paul replied: “Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense. -- Acts 24:10

- Why could Paul be cheerful? Paul had that confidence, that hope, that surety of God’s redemptive work in the present.
- Paul trusted in God’s character. He believed the promises of God.

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. -- Genesis 50:20

God’s providence implies that He has His hand in all our affairs. We are not at the mercy of arbitrary, impersonal forces, but in all of life we confront God Himself - Father, Son and

Spirit...The overall goal of God's providential activity, like that of His creative and redemptive activity, is His glory and our good... [therefore] we accept life as from Him, and with quiet confidence set about living it to His glory, believing that in all things we are in His hands and that He who created and redeemed us, through the daily ordering of our lives, is furthering His purpose through us. -- Bruce Milne

3. The Future

- Paul's hope was not only in the Lord's redemptive activity in the past and in the present, but also in the future.

having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. -- Acts 24:15

Questions for Discussion/Application:

- Re-read the text, Acts 24:1-7. What initial observations and insights do you have from reading this text.
- The Apostle Paul trusted God in his circumstances. In what ways is God calling you to trust Him in yours?
- Jeremy shared this quote on God's sovereignty:

God's providence implies that He has His hand in all our affairs. We are not at the mercy of arbitrary, impersonal forces, but in all of life we confront God Himself - Father, Son and Spirit...The overall goal of God's providential activity, like that of His creative and redemptive activity, is His glory and our good... [therefore] we accept life as from Him, and with quiet confidence set about living it to His glory, believing that in all things we are in His hands and that He who created and redeemed us, through the daily ordering of our lives, is furthering His purpose through us. -- Bruce Milne

- How does the biblical truth contained in this quote encourage you with reference to the difficulties we face in our world today?
- How does the truth in this quote encourage you with respect to trials and difficulties you may be facing personally?
- Consider taking time to pray, asking God to help us to trust Him in all circumstances and thereby glorify Him.