

## Repentance Never is Convenient

S. R. (Acts 24:22-27)

2 – 26 – 2023

- A. Luke's history of the early church (Acts) describes how the gospel spread across the world
- B. Rejection of the gospel is not Luke's story, but he does not entirely neglect it.
- C. Let us examine one of them (Felix and Drusilla - Acts 24).

### I. Biographical Sketch of Felix

#### A. Background Events: (Acts 21 - 23)

1. Paul has returned to Jerusalem to help needy saints (Rom.15:25-26; Acts 24:17).
2. In an effort to accommodate brethren and correct misconceptions, Paul, upon ceremonially purifying himself, made offerings in the temple (21:17-27; 24:17).
3. Asian Jews assaulted and attempted to murder Paul (21:31; 24:18-19).
4. Romans intervene (21:32ff.)
5. Paul appears before the Sanhedrin Council - controversy over resurrection (23:1-11)
6. Jewish conspiracy to kill Paul is thwarted by Claudius Lysias, commander of the fortress Antonia in Jerusalem) by sending him to Felix in Caesarea (23:12-33).

#### B. Felix, the man: (Acts 24:22 – 23)

1. Antonius Felix was a notoriously corrupt and brutal man.
2. An exslave (freedman), he had risen rapidly in the Roman administration of Palestine through the influence of his brother, Pallas, imperial treasurer under Claudius.
3. After serving in a lesser office in Galilee (48-52 AD), Felix was appointed procurator of Judea.
4. The Roman historian, Tacitus (55 - 120 AD), in his contempt reported that he (Felix) "thought he could commit every sort of iniquity and escape the consequences" and that he was "a master of cruelty and lust who exercised the powers of a king in the spirit of a slave." (*Histories* 5:9).
5. Whether due to his charm or his influence, Felix managed to marry above his station.
6. His three wives, including the current and last one whom he seduced away from her husband, were all princesses.

#### C. Felix - a sadly ironic celebrity.

#### D. Felix - a baffling personality.

1. In spite of his public corruption and private immorality, he had learned about Christians and their teaching (24:22).
2. Felix was concerned to hear more from his prisoner about "faith in Christ Jesus."

#### E. Felix' - response to the gospel (Acts 24:24 - 26).

1. Luke does not record Paul's sermon - but indicates that Paul went to the core of the problem (v.25).
2. Felix' response - "Frightened, afraid, terrified" (v.25; Jas. 2:19). "Demons believe and tremble."
3. Felix had access to Paul and the gospel for some time after, but never again, as far as we know, came so close to salvation.
4. Two years later he was recalled to Rome by Nero to face charges for his excesses.
5. Reportedly, he died soon after.

#### F. Applications:

1. Decisive opportunities are often brief and fleeting. (Heb. 3:7 – 8)
2. The frighteningly urgent need to repent is anesthetized by the false promise “I’ll change later.”

## II. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DRUSILLA

### A. Family Background:

1. Her great grandfather, Herod the Great, slaughtered the babies of Bethlehem.
2. Her great uncle, Herod Antipas, murdered John the Baptist.
3. Her father, Agrippa I, had executed James (Acts 12) and imprisoned Peter and then died at God’s hand when she was about six years old.

### B. Her immoral life:

1. All that she Abandoned:
  - a. As a young bride still in her teens, she abandoned her lawful and devoted husband.
  - b. Abandoned her family (brother Agrippa II and sister, Bernice).
  - c. Her faith in God; earlier her husband had converted to Judaism in order to marry her.
2. Why? To marry a brutal man who lusted for power and other men’s wives.

### C. Her Response to the Gospel

1. This young Jewess (probably about 20 years old) had heard the same compelling preaching as Felix (v.24).
2. She, like him, was not ignorant of the gospel (cf. 26:26-28).
3. Drusilla’s inner response to the gospel’s call for repentance is unknown.

### D. Drusilla’s Death

1. Drusilla, with her son Agrippa, survived the death of her husband to live for many years in Pompeii.
2. They were living in that wicked city in Aug. of 79 A.D. when that immense dark cloud of superheated ash mushroomed from the summit of Mt. Vesuvius and instantly suffocated the whole city.
3. I wonder if, on that fateful day, Drusilla had cause to remember the time 20 years earlier when God had spoken to her of repentance and forgiveness.

### Conclusion:

- A. There is no “convenient season” to repent. You will wait for it in vain.
  1. Why should we expect the change to be easy and painless when we have spent our time learning to sin?
    - a. Reason for the counsel to “**Remember now your Creator**” (Eccl.12:1).
  2. We should care about righteousness, self-control, because judgment is coming (24:25)
    - a. It is a matter of life and death spiritually (Eph. 2:1-5).
- B. The most opportune moment we will ever have to change is now.
- C. Never wait to do right.