

Five Days

-Based on 23:31-35, one might assume this is 5-days after arriving in Caesarea. -However, in view of v.11, likely the 5-days are from Paul's arrest in the temple. -Uncertain whether his arrest occurred on the last day of the 7-day purification or a day or two before its end ("when the seven days were nearly over," 21:26-27).

Charges Against Paul

(1) **Stirs up riots among all the Jews**

(2) **Ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes**

(3) **Profaning the temple.**

-With the first 2 charges, Tertullus is arguing that Paul is disturbing the **Pax Romana**

-Felix had crucified the leaders of various uprisings and killed their followers for disturbing the **Pax Romana** (Jos. War II, 253-63 [xiii.2-5])

-**Pax Romana** ("Roman peace") was the period of relative peace and minimal expansion by military force experienced by the Roman Empire in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. Established by Augustus.

-With the 3rd charge, he is arguing the right for Judaism to impose the death penalty (attempting to desecrate the temple; 21:28-29).

-As in Jesus' trial, their accusations were framed in political terms (**Luke 23:2, 5**), though all along their main grievance was religious.

Acts 23:2

¹And 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**.

²And 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,

³in every way and everywhere we accept this with all **gratitude**. <- Not the true view of most Jews, but Tertullus is appealing to Felix's vanity.

⁴But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly.

⁵For we have found this man a plague, ⁽¹⁾**one who stirs up riots among all the Jews** throughout the world and is a ⁽²⁾**ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes**.

⁶He even tried to ⁽³⁾**profane the temple**, but we seized him.

⁸By examining him yourself *you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him.*"

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

¹⁰And 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.*"

¹¹You can verify that it is **not more than twelve days** since I went up to **worship** in Jerusalem,

¹²and 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. <- Paul's answer to Charges 1 & 2 - See sidebar.

¹³**Neither can they prove to you** what they now bring up against me. <- Paul's answer to Charge #3 - It is completely without foundation (21:28-29)

¹⁴But 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, <- Paul points to the real reason why the Jewish leaders opposed him.

¹⁵having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. <- Acts 23:6-9

Tertullus

-A common Greek name. -Likely a Hellenistic Jew (Greek Speaking). -Likely an attorney. -He begins the case for the prosecution with flattery for the judge.

Antonius Felix

-Born a slave and freed by Antonia, the mother of the emperor Claudius.

-Brother was Pallas, who was also freed by Antonia and became a good friend of the prince Claudius in the imperial household.

-Because of Pallas, in A.D. 48 Felix was appointed to a government post in Samaria under the governor Ventidius Cumanus.

-In A.D. 52 Claudius appointed him governor of Judea when Cumanus was deposed.

-Josephus indicated that during his governorship, insurrections and anarchy increased throughout Palestine. (Jos. War II, 253-70 [xiii.2-7]; Antiq. XX, 160-81 [viii.5-8])

-Tacitus described him as "a master of cruelty and lust who exercised the powers of a king with the spirit of a slave" (Historiae 5.9)

Paul's Answer to 1 & 2

-He came for worship and not agitation (11)

-Had only been in Jerusalem a few days... wasn't time to start a revolt (11)

-He was alone when they found him (12)

¹⁶So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.

"Jews from Asia"
Acts 21:18-20,
27-29

¹⁷Now after several years I came to *bring alms* to my *nation* and to present offerings. <- Paul's is back to answering Charges 1 & 2

¹⁸While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, *without any crowd or tumult*. But some Jews from Asia—

¹⁹they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, should they have anything against me.

"bring alms..offerings"

-Only time in Acts that Luke mentions Paul's collection for poor Christians in Jerusalem

-Rom 15:25-27, 31
-1Co 16:1-4

"before the council"
Acts 23:1-6

²⁰Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when *I stood before the council*,

²¹other 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.*' "

"resurrection of the dead"

-Used by Paul and Luke to refer to the doctrine as validated and amplified by the resurrection of Jesus

-Acts 17:31-32

Antonius Felix

-He had been in Palestine long enough to know this was a religious matter

-Ananias was given a deceptive promise of a decision when Lysias came down to Caesarea

-Lysias had already given his testimony via letter (23:26-29)

-Drusilla was Felix's third wife and the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I

-Felix's downfall came through an outbreak of hostilities between Jews and Greeks at Caesarea, (Jos. War II, 266-70 [xiii.7]; Antiq. XX, 173-78 [viii.7]).

-Felix's intervention took the form of military retaliation upon the Jews.

-A delegation of Jews went to Rome to complain.

-Felix was recalled to Rome...his brother Pallas interceded for him before Nero (Jos. Antiq. XX, 182 [viii.9]).

-Felix was replaced by Festus in A.D. 60.

²²But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, put them off, saying, "When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case." <- Way: Acts 19:9,23; 22:4

²³Then 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.

²⁴After 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*.

²⁵And 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."

²⁶At the same time *he hoped that money* would be given him by Paul. So he sent for him often and conversed with him.

²⁷When *two years* had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

Paul's teaching on...

- (1) Righteousness
- (2) Self-control
- (3) Judgment

seems to have "cut to the quick." Felix and Drusilla didn't have the patience to listen to a lesson on moral living.

Five Days

Acts 21:26–27 (ESV)

²⁶ Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them.

²⁷ When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him,

Acts 23:31–35 (ESV)

³¹ So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. ³² And on the next day they returned to the barracks, letting the horsemen go on with him. ³³ When they had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. ³⁴ On reading the letter, he asked what province he was from. And when he learned that he was from Cilicia, ³⁵ he said, “I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive.” And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod’s praetorium.

Ananias

Acts 23:2 (ESV)

² And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth.

Felix

ANTONIUS FELIX The fourth governor/procurator of Judaea during the time of emperor Claudius and an important figure in the imprisonment of Paul (Acts 23–24).

Early Years

The early life of Felix is relatively unknown, save for his name (which is contested), that he had a brother, and that he was born a slave and later became a freedman (Suetonius, Claudius, 28). In antiquity, it was common for slaves to assume the name of the person who released them; therefore Felix’s name and the identity of the person who freed him are controversial. There is disagreement between Tacitus, who calls him Marcus Antonius Felix (Tacitus, *Histories*, 5.9), and Josephus, who calls him Tiberius Claudius Felix (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.7.1; Bruce, “Full Name”).

If Antonia released Felix, like his brother Pallas, then his name would be Antonius Felix (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18.182; 20.182). If, however, he was released by Antonia’s son Claudius, then his name would be Claudius Felix. There is no simple solution to this problem, although Emil Schürer, F. F. Bruce, and Colin Hemer have tried to determine an answer (Schürer, *History*, 175 n.18; Bruce, “Full Name”; Hemer, “Felix Again”). Both Bruce and Hemer base their discussion on an inscription from Bir el Malik, known as the Clemens epitaph. Bruce argues that the inscription includes the name Tiberius Claudius

[Felix]. However, Hemer states that the text is much more ambiguous. Thus, the issue remains unresolved.

Felix was married three times, but the names of only two of his wives are known (Suetonius, *Claudius*, 28). One was the granddaughter of Marc Antony and Cleopatra (Tacitus, *Histories*, 5.9). Although Tacitus refers to her as Drusilla, it is possible he is conflating this wife’s name with that of Felix’s second wife, Drusilla, the daughter of Agrippa I (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.142). His third wife remains unknown.

Rise to Power

Felix was assigned as the fourth procurator of Judaea by emperor Claudius and was one of many rulers beginning with Herod the Great (37 BC–4 BC) to have influenced the region.

Claudius appointed Felix at the behest of the high priest Jonathan, who was in Rome protesting Felix’s predecessor Cumanus’ mishandling of Jewish uprisings. Approximately 30,000 Jews died during the Jewish riots while Cumanus was procurator (Josephus, *Wars*, 2.224–27). The rioting and Cumanus’ reluctance to punish a Samaritan who murdered a Jew in Galilee, led to his removal. Felix was a favorite in Claudius’ household, so he was an obvious choice as the new procurator.

Reign in Judaea

Felix was a brutal and firm handed governor over the province of Judaea, ruling from AD 52–60 (Hemer, *Book of Acts*, 171). Although he was sent to bring the appearance of peace, his reign was rife with violence and uprisings (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.160; Tacitus, *Annals*, 12.54). He was left to address problems which Cumanus had failed to handle, including bandits, most notably the murderous Sicarii.

Evidence in Extrabiblical Sources. According to Tacitus, Felix ruled without fear of punishment from Rome (*Annals*, 12.54) and was very cruel: “Antonius Felix practiced every kind of cruelty and lust, wielding the power of a king with the instincts of a slave” (Tacitus, *Histories*, 5.9).

Felix was unable to control the chaos of the province over which he was appointed. Although he tried to quell Jewish insurrections, Josephus notes that matters progressively deteriorated (Josephus, *Wars*, 2.264). Witherington states, “Josephus is quite clear that the net effect of Felix’s rule was to add more fuel to the fire” (Witherington, *Acts of the Apostles*, 705 n.276). The situation degraded to the point that Jonathan, the high priest who insisted on Felix as Cumanus’s replacement, began to undermine Felix’s administration. In retribution for Jonathan’s outspoken criticism, Felix ordered the Sicarii to murder him (Brighton, *Sicarii*, 63–64).

After the death of Claudius, Nero became emperor and replaced Felix with Festus. Although the Jews pressed for Felix to be punished, Nero was reticent because of the influence of Pallas his brother (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.182).

Biblical Evidence. In their testimony before Felix in Acts, Ananias the high priest, some elders, and the lawyer Tertullus praise Felix for bringing peace and reform to Judaea (Acts 24:2)—which Witherington views as insincere, due to Felix’s penchant for violence

(Witherington, *Acts of the Apostles*, 703–704; Bock, *Acts*, 690). Rapske and Schnabel disagree, arguing the praise is appropriate considering the situation. Schnabel believes the praise was based on Felix’s recent peacekeeping activities (Schnabel, *Acts*, 952; Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, 159). According to Josephus (*Wars*, 2.253), Felix arrested a bandit named Eleazar, fought against the bandits with daggers (the Sicarii), and suppressed a rebellion by an Egyptian prophet who had threatened Jerusalem (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.169–172; *Wars*, 2.261–263; Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*, 167–70). Rapske believes the praise from Tertullus was rhetorical, in keeping with forensic dictum of the time.

Biblical Relevance

Felix played a moderately important role in the life of Paul as the procurator to whom Paul was sent when his life was threatened by a group of religious leaders (Acts 23–24). Paul was brought before Felix, who was to judge whether Paul had committed a crime. Paul’s appearance before him presents the opportunity to share his faith in Christ with Felix, who is already familiar with “the way” (Acts 24:22–25; Hemer, *Book of Acts*, 130). Paul was imprisoned for nearly two years (Acts 24:27), during which time Felix requested to meet with him frequently, apparently in hope that he would receive a bribe (Acts 24:26). Consequently, Felix’s greed gave Paul repeated opportunities to share Christ with him.

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DANIEL J. THORPE¹

Charges Against Paul

Pax Romana ([Latin](#) for "[Roman peace](#)") was the long period of relative peace and minimal expansion by military force experienced by the [Roman Empire](#) in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. Since it was established by [Augustus](#), it is sometimes called **Pax Augusta**. Its span was approximately 206 years (27 BC to 180 AD) according to [Encyclopedia Britannica](#)^[1] or from 70 AD to 192 AD according to [The Cambridge Ancient History](#).^[2]

The Pax Romana is said [\[by whom?\]](#) to have been a "miracle" because prior to it there had never been peace for so many centuries in a given period of human history.^[3] According to [Walter Goffart](#) however, "peace is not what one finds in it[s pages]".^[2] Arthur M. Eckstein writes that the period needs to be seen in contrast with the much more frequent warfare that occurred in the Roman Republic in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. Eckstein also notes that the incipient Pax Romana appeared during the Republic and that its temporal span varied with geographical region as well: "Although the standard textbook dates for the Pax Romana, the famous "Roman Peace" in the Mediterranean, are 31 BC to AD 250, the fact is that the Roman Peace was emerging in large regions of the Mediterranean at a much earlier date: Sicily after 210 [BC]; peninsular Italy after 200 [BC]; the Po Valley after 190 [BC]; most of Spain after 133 [BC]; North Africa after 100 [BC]; and for ever longer stretches of time in the Greek East".^[4]

The first historical record of the term *Pax Romana* appears to be in a writing of [Seneca the Younger](#) in 55 AD.^[5] The concept was highly influential, being theorized upon and attempted to be copied in subsequent ages. [Arnaldo Momigliano](#) noted that "*Pax Romana* is a simple formula for [propaganda](#), but a difficult subject for [research](#)".^[6]

The Pax Romana started after Octavian (Augustus) defeated [Mark Antony](#) in the [Battle of Actium](#) on 2 September 31 BC.^[citation needed] He became [princeps](#), or "first citizen". Lacking a good precedent of successful one-man rule, Augustus created a [junta](#) of the greatest military magnates and stood as the front man. By binding together these leading magnates in a coalition, he eliminated the prospect of civil war. The Pax Romana was not immediate, despite the end of the civil wars, because fighting continued in [Hispania](#) and in the Alps. Nevertheless, Augustus closed the [Gates of Janus](#) (the Roman ceremony to mark world Peace) three times,^[7] first in 29 BC and again in 25 BC. The third closure is undocumented, but Inez Scott Ryberg (1949) and Gaius Stern (2006) have persuasively dated the third closure to 13 BC with the [Ara Pacis](#) ceremony.^{[8][9][10]} At the time of the Ludi Saeculares in 17 BC the concept of Peace was publicized, and in

¹ Thorpe, D. J. (2012, 2013, 2014). Antonius Felix. In J. D. Barry, L. Wentz, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair-Wolcott, R. Klippenstein, D. Bomar, ... D. R. Brown (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

13 BC was proclaimed when Augustus and Agrippa jointly returned from pacifying the provinces. The Ara Pacis ceremony was no doubt part of this announcement.

Augustus faced a problem making peace an acceptable mode of life for the Romans, who had been at war with one power or another continuously for 200 years.^[9] Romans regarded peace not as an absence of war, but the rare situation that existed when all opponents had been beaten down and lost the ability to resist.^[6] Augustus' challenge was to persuade Romans that the prosperity they could achieve in the absence of warfare was better for the Empire than the potential wealth and honor acquired when fighting a risky war. Augustus succeeded by means of skillful propaganda. Subsequent emperors followed his lead, sometimes producing lavish ceremonies to close the Gates of Janus, issuing coins with Pax on the reverse, and patronizing literature extolling the benefits of the Pax Romana.^{[9]2}

Acts 21:28–29 (ESV)

²⁸ crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” ²⁹ For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

Luke 23:2 (ESV)

² And they began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.”

Luke 23:5 (ESV)

⁵ But they were urgent, saying, “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place.”

Resurrection

Acts 23:6–9 (ESV)

⁶ Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.” ⁷ And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ⁸ For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. ⁹ Then a great clamor arose, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees’ party stood up and contended sharply, “We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?”

² Wikipedia contributors, 'Pax Romana', *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, 17 Nov 2014, 1:16 UTC, <[http://http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pax_Romana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pax_Romana)> [accessed 18 Nov 2014]

Bring Alms

Romans 15:25–27 (ESV)

²⁵ At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. ²⁶ For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. ²⁷ For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.

Romans 15:31 (ESV)

³¹ that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,

1 Corinthians 16:1–4 (ESV)

¹ Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. ² On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. ³ And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

Jews From Asia

Acts 21:18–20 (ESV)

¹⁸ On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. ¹⁹ After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. ²⁰ And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the law,

Acts 21:27–29 (ESV)

²⁷ When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, ²⁸ crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” ²⁹ For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

Before the Council

Acts 23:1–6 (ESV)

¹ And looking intently at the council, Paul said, “Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day.” ² And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. ³ Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and

yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?”⁴ Those who stood by said, “Would you revile God’s high priest?”⁵ And Paul said, “I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’ ”

⁶ Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.”

Resurrection of the Dead

Acts 17:31–32 (ESV)

³¹ because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

³² Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.”

The Way

Acts 19:9 (ESV)

⁹ But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.

Acts 19:23 (ESV)

²³ About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way.

Acts 22:4 (ESV)

⁴ I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women,

Lysias’ Testimony

Acts 23:26–29 (ESV)

²⁶ “Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. ²⁷ This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen. ²⁸ And desiring to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council.

²⁹ I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment.