

JUDGMENT

“As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid . . .” (Acts 24:25)

There is no doubt about it, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Ps. 111:10). The thought of making God mad makes rational people repent. Students study harder when they know a test is coming and sinners think twice about their conduct if they believe they will face God in Judgment after they die.

Thus, the Day Judgment is an integral part of Biblical preaching. John the Baptist warned that some day God was going to gather the wheat and burn the chaff (Matt. 3:12). Jesus said that the men of Nineveh would rise up in the Judgment and condemn those who refused to repent (Matt. 12:41). Paul promised the Philosophers on Mars Hill that God had set a day in which He will judge the world (Acts 17:31). The writer of Hebrews assured his readers that it is appointed unto men once to die and after that the Judgment (Heb. 9:27). Those who preach the truth must warn the world about Judgment. One of the reasons why God sent His Holy Spirit was to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and Judgment (Jn. 16:8). If the watchman fails to warn sinners, they will die in their iniquity, but their blood will be required at the watchman's hand (Ez. 3:18). Jesus warned: **“I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.” (Luke 12:4-5)**

Antonius Felix was the Governor of Judea. He is mentioned by name ten times in the Bible. Tacitus, the historian, described him in the *Histories* (5:9) as “*a master of cruelty and lust who exercised the powers of a king in the spirit of a slave*”. The Roman soldier, Claudius Lysias, wrote to him as “His Excellency, Governor Felix” (Acts 23:26). The lawyer, Tertullus, designated him “most excellent Felix” (Acts 24:3). Paul recognized him as “the judge of this nation” (Acts 24:10), but also warned him regarding Judgment and the resurrection both of the righteous and the wicked (Acts 24:16). Luke wrote that he was “well acquainted with the way” (Acts 24:22).

In the world of politics, people often obtain power by appointment. Felix was a “freedman” that is, a slave who had been set free. He became governor through the influence of another social reject named Pallas. Such men were looked down upon by the aristocracy. Felix had a brother who was also a powerful politician and found a measure of protection by remaining in his shadow. Such men, however, lived in perpetual insecurity. Within the last half century Rome had five different Caesars (Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero). From A.D. 44 - A.D. 70 Judea had 8 different rulers. The point is that Felix knew he was in a precarious position. When Paul spoke of “judgment to come” he was afraid. He knew that the next “judge” above him on the political ladder could end his career with the stroke of a pen. Aware of the many sins in his life, facing God in Judgment was not a happy thought. Sadly, however, his fear did not lead him to repentance. He was almost persuaded to be a Christian, but decided to wait for a more convenient season to actually do it (Acts 24:25). Apparently that convenient season never came. It almost never does.

Sure enough, in only two short years Felix was recalled by Nero and replaced by Porcius Festus (Acts 24:27). From that point on he fades into obscurity from human history, but not from the record books of God. Some day Felix will stand before the Judgment seat of Christ to give an account of the deeds he did on earth, whether they were good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10). Someday, all of us will also stand before the Judgment seat of Christ. If Judas had thought about Judgment, he might not have jumped. Remember! Jesus said it would have been good for Judas if he had never been born Mk. 14:21). Now that you know about Judgment, what will you do about it?