

“I STAND FOR THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION”

Acts 24:10-21

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INTRODUCTION

Paul was accused of three things:

- 1) Stirring up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world
- 2) Being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes
- 3) Attempting to desecrate the temple

Paul masterfully, without a lawyer of his own, defends his position of innocence, while at the same time putting forth a masterful defense of Christianity. Israel’s hope is of future resurrection from the dead—this is exactly what Christianity stands for in the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

Note the following points of Paul’s defense:

- 1) No flattery—only truth (v. 10)
- 2) There was no time to lead such an insurrection (11)
- 3) I was not conducting public discussions (12)
- 4) I was not stirring up a riot; his activities were in public and they found nothing amiss (12)
- 5) The new charges that they now bring up (v. 5) are baseless (13).
- 6) I do admit one thing—I serve God in the group known as “The Way”—“guilty as charged!” (14)
- 7) They call it a “sect” (heresy); but I serve “the God of our fathers” (14)
- 8) I believe everything in accord with the Law and the Prophets—the OT Scriptures!
- 9) I have a hope in God—that even some of these men (Pharisees and the common people) also hold dear (15).
- 10) This resurrection of both righteous (Dan. 12:2) and unrighteous based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15).
- 11) Because I am thus accountable, I always put forth my best effort “to maintain a blameless conscience—before God and before men. Why then would I be causing a riot? (16)
- 12) Note that this is the very claim for which the high priest had Paul struck in 23:1-2!
- 13) I had not been in Jerusalem for any extended time for years (17).
- 14) I came for two reasons: 1) to bring alms “to my nation”—I still belong and I am the agent of peace! (17) 2) I came to present offerings at the temple—to worship—v. 11. These were likely connected with Pentecost, with thank offerings from Paul, and especially with the rites of purification mentioned in 21:23ff for Paul and the 4 men.
- 15) My accusers found me thus occupied in the “temple”—having already been “purified”—in such a state (18).
- 16) No crowd was gathered, and there was no “uproar”; however, they caused such an “uproar” (21:34).

- 17) My accusers were “certain Jews from Asia”—who are not even here (18b-19a); if these accusers have anything to present against me, they should be present to make their accusation! (19b)
- 18) Thus, **this is not even a valid trial for you to preside over!**
- 19) These men before you today do not have anything to present against me either—they can find no legitimate “misdeed”, that is blamable office for which I can be tried before you. (20)
- 20) I stood before their council, and the only “fault” they could find was my previously mentioned faith in the “resurrection from the dead”. That is really why I am on trial before you today (21).
- 21) As you can this, this is a purely religious matter about which you as a Roman judge have no legitimate concern .

CONCLUSION

Christianity is all about the resurrection. If you wish to defend the faith, start right here!

We have no hope and there is no hope if Jesus Christ is not risen from the dead!

This is the hope of the OT believer, and it is the hope of the NT believer.

We walk in the true Way—which is Jesus Christ, “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (Jm. 14:6).

How we need to be just as careful to maintain a good conscience as was Paul—v. 16), and how we need to avoid causing men to stumble, and to stumble ourselves before God. **We need to take pains in our religious life.** It takes ardent and persistent effort to live the Christian life consistently.

We must care about the unity of the brethren as did Paul (v. 17) and we must be occupied in worshiping and glorifying God with purity of life (18).

We must “serve” religiously our God, and we must **believe everything taught in entirety of the Scriptures** (14).

WHAT A PRIVILEGE IT IS TO BE A CHRISTIAN AND TO SERVE OUR GREAT GOD!