

Three Things That Caused Felix To Tremble

The prophecy of Agabus (Acts 21:11) is soon fulfilled and Paul finds himself being arrested and on trial before the Sanhedrin. Later Paul, upon a conspiracy to kill him, is moved to Caesarea. At Caesarea, Paul has three opportunities to present his defense and to preach the gospel to the Roman authorities who now hold him under arrest. Paul will appear before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. In this article, we are concerned about Paul's appearance before Felix, the governor and procurator of Judea. Felix, having knowledge of these Christians, deferred Paul's first hearing (Acts 24:22). Then after certain days, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ (Acts 24:24) and listened to the point that he "trembled" (Acts 24:24-25). What did Paul say that caused Felix to tremble?

Righteousness

"Righteousness" refers to the qualities of being righteous or just. We must awake to righteousness! In 1 Corinthians 15:34, Paul tells the Corinth brethren: "Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God." We must also put on the breastplate of righteousness. In Ephesians 6:14, it says we must "stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness." We must follow after righteousness. In 1 Timothy 6:11 Paul tells the young preacher Timothy to do this. It says, "But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness." Paul even speaks about a crown of righteousness in 2 Timothy 4:8. As Christians, we must strive to be righteousness. In 1 John 2:29, the Scriptures say, "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him" and the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16-17).

Temperance

"Temperance" refers to self-control and is to control or master the passions and desires of the body. This matter was something that the governor and his adulterous wife needed to hear! What does the Scriptures tell us about temperance? It says that it is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23). In 2 Peter 1:5-9, Peter discusses growth in Christ and he says we must "add temperance". To run in the race of life, one must be temperate. In 1 Corinthians 9:25-27, Paul tells us "everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore, I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified."

Judgment

This is the anticipation of the final judgment that John saw in Revelation 20, when he saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. There will be a day of judgment (Matthew 12:26; Acts 17:31). The time of the judgment will be unknown. In Mark 13:32,

Jesus tells us, "But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone." The Father has committed all judgment to His Son. In John 5:22, Jesus also tells us, "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son." We must prepare for the judgment to come or else incur the wrath of God!

Felix, after hearing about faith in Christ, said, "Go away for the present, and when I find time I will summon you." Some quiet their alarm by convincing themselves that they will pay attention later. As far as the record is concerned, Felix never did obey the gospel of Christ. Don't be like Felix! Be like the Philippian jailer who asked, "What must I do to be saved?" and responded in obedience to the Lord's will the same hour of the night.

Joseph Lachausse