

~FELIX (128)

(Fe'lix) [from Latin, Happy]

- The procurator of the Roman province of Judea who held Paul prisoner for two years after Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, in about **56 C.E.** Tacitus indicates that **Felix** served jointly with Cumanus in the office of procurator for a number of years and thereafter as the sole procurator of Judea. [The Annals, XII, 54]
- Josephus makes no mention of Felix serving concurrently with Cumanus, and for that reason most scholars say that Felix began to serve as procurator in **52 C.E.** [Jewish Antiquities, XX, 137, vii, 1], [The Jewish War, II, 247,248, xii, 8]
- Nevertheless, on the basis of Felix's years of service, Paul could say to him;
- And Paul, when the governor nodded to him to speak, answered; Knowing well that this nation has had you as judge for many years, I readily speak in my defense the things about myself. (Acts of Apostles 24:10)
- Secular historians say that **Felix** was once a slave, that his given name was Antonius, that Emperor Claudius granted him and his brother Pallas their freedom, and that he was a cruel and immoral official.
- Tacitus described him as one who practiced every kind of cruelty and lust, wielding the power of king with all the instincts of a slave. [The Histories, V, IX]
- He is reported to have engineered the killing of High Priest Jonathan. Suetonius says that Felix became the husband of three queens. [The Lives of the Caesars, Claudius, XXVIII]
- Such description agrees with what we learn of Felix in the Bible.
- Following Paul's arrest, Claudius Lysias, the Roman military commander, fearing for the safety of his prisoner if allowed to remain in Jerusalem, hustled the apostle down to Caesarea under heavy guard, commanding the accusers to speak against him before **Felix**.

- And he summoned a certain two of the army officers and said; Get two hundred soldiers ready to march clear to Caesarea, also seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen, at the third hour of the night. (**Acts of Apostles 23:23**)
- Also, provide beasts of burden that they may have Paul ride and convey him safely to **Felix** the governor. (**Acts of Apostles 23:24**)
- And he wrote a letter having this form. (**Acts of Apostles 23:25**)
- Claudius Lysias to his excellency, Governor **Felix**. Greetings! (**Acts of Apostles 23:26**)
- This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be done away with by them, but I came suddenly with a force of soldiers and rescued him, because I learned he was a Roman. (**Acts of Apostles 23:27**)
- And wishing to ascertain the cause for which they were accusing him, I brought him down into their Sanhedrin. (**Acts of Apostles 23:28**)
- I found him to be accused about questions of their Law, but not charged with a single thing deserving of death or bonds. (**Acts of Apostles 23:29**)
- But because a plot that is to be laid against the man has been disclosed to me, I am at once sending him to you, and commanding the accusers to speak against him before you. (**Acts of Apostles 23:30**)
- Five days later High Priest Ananias, a certain Tertullus, and others came down from Jerusalem with preposterous charges against Paul. **Felix** presided at the trial, deferring judgment. He ordered that Paul be kept, but with some relaxation of custody, and that none of Paul's people be forbidden to wait upon him.
- **Felix** later sent for Paul and listened to him on the belief in Christ Jesus. It was on this occasion, possibly with Felix's wife Drusilla present, that Paul talked about righteousness and self-control and the judgment to come.
- On hearing these things Felix became frightened and told the apostle: For the present go your way, but when I get an opportune

time I shall send for you again. Frequently, during a two-year period, Felix sent for and conversed with Paul, futilely hoping that the apostle would give him money as a bribe for his release.

- Some days later **Felix** arrived with Drusilla his wife, who was a Jewess, and he sent for Paul and listened to him on the belief in Christ Jesus. ([Acts of Apostles 24:24](#))
- But as he talked about righteousness and self-control and the judgment to come, **Felix** became frightened and answered: For the present go your way, but when I get an opportune time I shall send for you again. ([Acts of Apostles 24:25](#))
- At the same time, though, he was hoping for money to be given him by Paul. On that account he sent for him even more frequently and would converse with him. ([Acts of Apostles 24:26](#))
- But, when two years had elapsed, **Felix** was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and because Felix desired to gain favor with the Jews, he left Paul bound. ([Acts of Apostles 24:27](#))
- The administration by **Felix** was highly resented by the Jews. Perhaps in **58 C.E.** Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and because **Felix** desired to gain favor with the Jews, he left Paul bound.
- But, when two years had elapsed, **Felix** was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and because **Felix** desired to gain favor with the Jews, he left Paul bound. ([Acts of Apostles 24:27](#))
- However, this gesture on the part of **Felix** did not soothe the wounds he had inflicted on the Jews, nor did it prevent them from sending a delegation to Rome to press their case against him. His escaping punishment after recall to Rome is accredited only to the favored position and influence his brother Pallas had with Nero.