

Not By Convenience!

by Wayne Goff

Convenience is not an *inherently* bad thing. The apostle Paul explained to the church at Corinth that Apollos would come to them at a “*convenient time*” (1 Cor. 16:12). The word in the original language means “to be disposed to attend, to give time” to a thing. The same word is even translated elsewhere as “*leisure*” time (Mk. 6:31).

When convenience becomes bad is when we apply it to things of great importance, such as the salvation of our eternal souls! Paul urged the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain (2 Cor. 6:1)! They could do that by *lacking the sense of urgency* to make right with God the things that were lacking in their lives or in the congregation! In order to bolster his argument, Paul quotes Isaiah (49:8) and concludes, “*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*” (2 Cor. 6:2).

Felix, a Roman governor in the first century, infamously stated to Paul “*Go away for now; when I have a **convenient time** I will call for you*” (Acts 24:25). Paul had just spoken to Felix about “*righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come*”! The thought of a future judgment before God terrified Felix, but he put off his possible salvation until he could find a *convenient time*. Dear reader, let me suggest to you that there is never a convenient time to repent of a life of sin, turn away from sin with its pleasures and lusts and humbly turn to God for forgiveness, mercy, and grace!

Felix’s Past

Ironically, the name Felix comes from a Latin word meaning “happy.” Felix was the brother of the infamous Pallas, a favorite of the emperor Claudius, and a financial genius at the time.

Felix was appointed governor over most of the kingdom of Agrippa I, a position bolstered by his marriage to Drusilla, Agrippa’s sister. Felix showed little sympathy for the Jews, and while he led a sweeping campaign against the numerous bandits in and around Palestine, he also is believed to have bribed the sicarii to murder the high priest responsible for his appointment!

Furthermore, he slaughtered the followers of a self-proclaimed prophet (Acts 21:27-38), and even arrested priests and had them bound and sent to Rome.

We can see the ruthless character of Felix likewise as he kept Paul in prison for two years waiting for a bribe to release him (Acts 24:26-27). Failing to receive such a bribe from Paul or his friends, Felix left Paul in prison when he left office in order to do the Jews a favor!

Impenitent Felix

When the emperor Nero relieved Felix of his command, leading Jews charged Felix with misconduct. He escaped imperial discipline because of his brother’s influence at the time.

Even though the New Testament says that Felix had “*more accurate knowledge of the Way*” (Acts 24:22), he never acted on his knowledge or on his experience with Paul. It is obvious that he never repented of his wickedness while in office, because his actions were unscrupulous until the time of his departure.

Felix’s wife, Drusilla, and a child by her, died suddenly in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius (79 A.D.). This catastrophic event buried the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum and caused the deaths of 16,000 people, many of whom were buried alive! Felix is known to have married a third time, but little is known about his third wife. I could find no record of his death.

It was said of Felix that he “indulged in every kind of cruelty and immorality, wielding a king’s authority with all the instincts of a slave” [**Tacitus Histories Book 2**].