

## Ancient Sources for Acts

### Chapter 24

24:1–9

Ad Herennium 1.4.8

We can by four methods make our hearers well-disposed: by discussing our own person, the person of our adversaries, that of our hearers, and the facts themselves.

Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*. 4.1.21

For the purpose of the statement of facts is not merely to instruct, but rather to persuade the judge. Therefore, when we desire to influence him in some way or other, although he may require no instruction, we shall preface our statement with some such remarks as these: “I know that you are aware of the general nature of the case, but I trust you will not take it ill if I ask you to consider each point in detail.”

Tacitus, *Annals* 12.54 (See on Acts 23:23–30)

*Shemoneh Esreh* 12

And for slanderers let there be no hope, and let all wickedness perish as in a moment; let all Your enemies be speedily cut off, and the dominion of arrogance uproot and crush, cast down and humble speedily in our days. Blessed art thou, O L-rd, who breaks the enemies and humbles the arrogant.

Jerome, *On Illustrious Men* 3

MATTHEW, also called Levi, apostle and aforesaid publican, composed a gospel of Christ at first published in Judea in Hebrew for the sake of those of the circumcision who believed, but this was afterwards translated into Greek though by what author is uncertain. The Hebrew itself has been preserved until the present day in the library. at Caesarea which Pamphilus so diligently gathered. I have also had the opportunity of having the volume described to me by the Nazarenes of Beroea, a city of Syria, who use it. In this it is to be noted that wherever the Evangelist, whether on his own account or in the person of our Lord the Savior quotes the testimony of the Old Testament he does not follow the authority of the translators of the Septuagint but the Hebrew. Wherefore these two forms exist “Out of Egypt have I called my son,” and “for he shall be called a Nazarene.”

Jerome, *Epist.* 120.3

It is true that he presently felt in battle the hand of our Nazarene or, as he used to call him, the Galilaean, and that a spear-thrust in the vitals paid him due recompense for his foul calumnies.

24:17–21

Appian, *Rom. Hist.: Civ. Wars* 3.54

While Cicero was yet speaking his friends broke forth in such tumultuous applause that for a long time nobody could be heard on the other side, until finally Piso came forward, when the senators, out of respect for him, became silent and even the Ciceronians restrained themselves. Then Piso said: "Our law, Senators, requires that the accused shall himself hear the charge preferred against him and shall be judged after he has made his own defense; and for the truth of this I appeal to Cicero, our greatest orator. Since, however, he hesitates to accuse Antony when present, but brings against him in his absence certain charges which he considers of the greatest gravity, and not open to doubt, I have come forward to show, in the fewest words, that these charges are false. He says that Antony converted the public money to his own use after Caesar's death. The law declares such a person to be a thief, not a public enemy, and limits his punishment accordingly. After Brutus had killed Caesar he accused the latter before the people of plundering the public money and leaving the treasury empty. Soon afterward Antony proposed a decree to investigate these matters and you adopted and confirmed his motion and promised a reward of one-tenth to informers, which reward we will double if anybody will prove that Antony had any part in the fraud.

**24:22–27**

Tacitus, *Annals* 13.14

Some there were who put even a worse meaning on her words. And so Nero, furious with those who abetted such arrogance in a woman, removed Pallas from the charge of the business with which he had been entrusted by Claudius, and in which he acted, so to say, as the controller of the throne. The story went that as he was departing with a great retinue of attendants, the emperor rather wittily remarked that Pallas was going to swear himself out of office. Pallas had in truth stipulated that he should not be questioned for anything he had done in the past, and that his accounts with the State were to be considered as balanced. Thereupon, with instant fury, Agrippina rushed into frightful menaces, sparing not the prince's ears her solemn protest "that Britannicus was now of full age, he who was the true and worthy heir of his father's sovereignty, which a son, by mere admission and adoption, was abusing in outrages on his mother. She shrank not from an utter exposure of the wickedness of that ill-starred house, of her own marriage, to begin with, and of her poisoner's craft. All that the gods and she herself had taken care of was that her stepson was yet alive; with him she would go to the camp, where on one side should be heard the daughter of Germanicus on the other, the crippled Burrus and the exile Seneca claiming, forsooth, with disfigured hand, and a pedant's tongue, the government of the world." As she spoke, she raised her hand in menace and heaped insults on him, as she appealed to the deified Claudius, to the infernal shades of the Silani, and to those many fruitless crimes.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.7.2 §141–44 (See Acts 23:23–30)

Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 2.13.7 §266–70

7. (266) There was also another disturbance at Caesarea:—those Jews who were mixed with the Syrians that lived there, raising a tumult against them. The Jews pretended that the city was theirs, and said that he who built it was a Jew; meaning King Herod. The Syrians confessed also that its builder was a Jew; but they still said, however, that the city was a Grecian city; for that he who set up statues and temples in it could not design it for Jews. (267) On which account both parties had a contest with one another; and this contest increased so much, that it came at last to arms, and the bolder sort of them marched out to fight; for the elders of the Jews were not able to put a stop to

their own people that were disposed to be tumultuous, and the Greeks thought it a shame for them to be overcome by the Jews. (268) Now these Jews exceeded the others in riches and strength of body; but the Grecian part had the advantages of assistance from the soldiery; for the greatest part of the Roman garrison was raised out of Syria; and being thus related to the Syrian part, they were ready to assist it. (269) However, the governors of the city were concerned to keep all quiet, and whenever they caught those that were most for fighting on either side, they punished them with stripes and bonds. Yet did not the sufferings of those that were caught affright the remainder, or make them desist; but they were still more and more exasperated, and deeper engaged in the sedition. (270) And as Felix came once into the marketplace, and commanded the Jews, when they had beaten the Syrians, to go their ways, and threatened them if they would not, and they would not obey him, he sent his soldiers out upon them and slew they great many of them, upon which it fell out that what they had was plundered. And as the sedition still continued, he chose out the most eminent men on both sides as ambassadors to Nero, to argue about their several privileges.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.8.7–9 §173–78

7. (173) And now it was that a great sedition arose between the Jews that inhabited Caesarea, and the Syrians who dwelt there also, concerning their equal right to the privileges belonging to citizens; for the Jews claimed the preeminence, because Herod their king was the builder of Caesarea, and because he was by birth a Jew. Now the Syrians did not deny what was alleged about Herod; but they said that Caesarea was formerly called Strato's Tower, and that then there was not one Jewish inhabitant. (174) When the presidents of that country heard of these disorders, they caught the authors of them on both sides, and tormented them with stripes and by that means put a stop to the disturbance for a time. (175) But the Jewish citizens depending on their wealth, and on that account despising the Syrians, reproached them again, and hoped to provoke them by such reproaches. (176) However, the Syrians, though they were inferior in wealth, yet valuing themselves highly on this account, that the greatest part of the Roman soldiers that were there, were either of Caesarea or Sebaste, they also for some time used reproachful language to the Jews also; and thus it was, till at length they came to throwing stones at one another; and several were wounded, and fell on both sides, though still the Jews were the conquerors. (177) But when Felix saw that this quarrel was become a kind of war, he came upon them on the sudden, and desired the Jews to desist; and when they refused so to do, he armed his soldiers, and sent them out upon them, and slew many of them, and took more of them alive, and permitted his soldiers to plunder some of the houses of the citizens, which were full of riches. (178) Now those Jews that were more moderate, and of principal dignity among them, were afraid of themselves, and desired of Felix that he would sound a retreat to his soldiers, and spare them for the future, and afford them room for repentance for what they had done; and Felix was prevailed upon to do so.

Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 2.14.1 §271

Now it was that Festus succeeded Felix as procurator, and made it his business to correct those that made disturbances in the country. So he caught the greatest part of the robbers, and destroyed a great many of them.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.8.9–10 §182–88

9. (182) Now, when Porcius Festus was sent as successor to Felix by Nero, the principal of the Jewish inhabitants of Cesarea went up to Rome to accuse Felix; and he had certainly been brought

to punishment, unless Nero had yielded to the importunate solicitations of his brother Pallas, who was at that time had in the greatest honor by him. (183) Two of the principal Syrians in Cesarea persuaded Burrhus, who was Nero's tutor, and secretary for his Greek epistles, by giving him a great sum of money, to disannul that equality of the Jewish privileges of citizens which they hitherto enjoyed. (184) So Burrhus, by his solicitations, obtained leave of the emperor, that an epistle should be written to that purpose. This epistle became the occasion of the following miseries that befell our nation; for, when the Jews of Cesarea were informed of the contents of this epistle to the Syrians, they were more disorderly than before, till a war was kindled.

**10.** (185) Upon Festus's coming into Judea, it happened that Judea was afflicted by the robbers, while all the villages were set on fire, and plundered by them. (186) And then it was that the sicarii, as they were called, who were robbers, grew numerous. They made use of small swords, not much different in length from the Persian acinacae, but somewhat crooked, and like the Roman sicae [or sickles] as they were called; and from these weapons these robbers got their denomination; and with these weapons they slew a great many; (187) for they mingled themselves among the multitude at their festivals, when they were come up in crowds from all parts to the city to worship God, as we said before, and easily slew those that they had a mind to slay. They also came frequently upon the villages belonging to their enemies, with their weapons, and plundered them, and set them on fire. (188) So Festus sent forces, both horsemen and footmen, to fall upon those that had been seduced by a certain impostor, who promised them deliverance and freedom from the miseries they were under, if they would but follow him as far as the wilderness. Accordingly those forces that were sent destroyed both him that had deluded them, and those that were his followers also.