

<b>Subject</b>	Lessons from Acts	4424
		Acts 24
<b>Title</b>	7 Lessons from Acts 24	
<b>Proposition</b>	To study Acts 24 looking for lessons to help us follow the pattern of the New Testament church.	
<b>Objective</b>	So that we can be the kind of people God would have us to be.	

### 7 LESSONS FROM ACTS 24

#### Introduction:

1. The innocent person who is falsely charged welcomes the opportunity for the facts to be presented.
2. Such was the case with Paul as he stands before Felix.
3. A flowery orator was selected by the Jews to present the case against Paul.
4. Paul argues that the only reason he was arrested had to do with differences in religious convictions.
5. Felix decides to wait a while before announcing his decision in the case.
6. There is a second hearing before Felix.
  - 1) Paul preached the gospel to Felix and caused Felix to understand his need for salvation.
  - 2) However, Satan remained in control of Felix' life as procrastination is allowed to reign in his life.
  - 3) How VERY foolish he was to put off obeying the Lord.
  - 4) It is revealed to us here that Felix leaned toward letting Paul go IF he would pay a little money as a bribe.
  - 5) However, two years pass by and Paul remains in prison at Caesarea.

#### DISCUSSION: One LESSON from Acts

#### 1. There is NO good reason for Christians to be called NAZARENES (5).

Acts 24:5 For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

1. When I was growing up as a young boy in Jonesboro, AR, my neighbors two doors one way were Christians; two doors down the other way the family was a NAZARENE family.
  - 1) Each family included boys about my same age and we did all kinds of fun things together.
  - 2) Eventually, one of the other boys became a preacher for the Church of the NAZARENE.
  - 3) The other guy became a game warden.
  - 4) And, here I am preaching for you.
  - 5) It is sad to me that the four of us were not able to go to worship together.
    - 1- Two of the boys were very faithful in their attendance at the Church of the NAZARENE.
    - 2- Two of us worshipped at the same location—The old Fisher Street church of Christ.
  - 6) It was strange to hear that family speaking about being Nazarenes.
  - 7) STRANGE, because there is no good reason for Christians to be called by that name.
2. NAZARENE derives from the city, Nazareth, the town in which Jesus grew up.
  - 1) It wasn't really such a great thing to be known as a Nazarene in those days— John 1:46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.
    - 1- A more literal rendering: FROM NAZARETH CAN ANY GOOD THING BE?

- 2- So unimportant and insignificant was the place that it was thought no good thing to be from that place.
- 3- With that background, it seems obvious that the label given to followers of Jesus was INTENDED to be given with DISRESPECT.
- 2) This is the ONLY place in the NT where the word is applied to Christians—and it is employed by an enemy of Christianity.
- 3. The fact is that there is no authority for Christians to use this name to identify themselves!
  - 1) Most Christians are not natives of Nazareth.
  - 2) There is no glory given to Christ by wearing such a name.

### One LESSON from Acts

## 2. CHRIST'S WAY was a SPECIFIC WAY which was easily identifiable (14).

- Acts 24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after **the way** which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:
1. In Bible study we need to pay close attention to GRAMMAR, and sometimes it is more important than others.
  2. Here it is important to notice the NUMBER of the noun: WAY.
    - 1) WAY is singular, it is NOT plural.
    - 2) When enemies of the church spoke about the church in the first century there were NOT in existence multiple denominations.
    - 3) This is why the BEST way to speak of Christianity today (in relationship to denominations), and the least confusing way, is to refer to it as PRE-DENOMINATIONAL.
    - 4) There simply was a SINGULAR WAY that the followers of Jesus of Nazareth for known to support.
  3. The question we NEED to be asking our denominational friends TODAY is WHAT CHURCH WERE THE EARLY DISCIPLES ADDED TO— Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And **the Lord added to the church** daily such as should be saved.
    - 1) And the answer we have to give them is that there was ONLY ONE WAY.
    - 2) There were none of today's denominational bodies in existence at that time.
    - 3) Matthew 16:16-18 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (17) And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. (18) And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I will build my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
  4. The WAY 1<sup>st</sup> Century Christians were living their lives was UNIQUE, it stood out as being different.
  5. It is quite possible to duplicate that same WAY by using the SEED and following the pattern of the NT.
    - 1) In explaining the PARABLE of the Sower, Jesus tells us— Luke 8:11 **Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.**
      - 1- We can take up our copies of the Bible and wherever it is or whenever it is that we live.
      - 2- We can begin sowing the same seed and we will produce the same WAY.
    - 2) Colossians 3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, **do all in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

- 1- So long as we follow this admonition from the Apostle Paul, and have a BCV for all that we do, we will be following the same WAY they followed and were noted for in Acts 24.14.
- 2- Those religious groups who swerve away from BCV teaching and practice are NOT the WAY of Acts 24.14!!!

## One LESSON from Acts

**3. ONLY TWO groups of people will be resurrected (15).**

Acts 24:15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of **the just and unjust**.

1. The WAY that we have spoken of, the WAY of following Christ's teaching is truly SIMPLE.
  - 1) There are not multiple destinations prepared for all of mankind.
  - 2) Jesus teaches that there are only TWO.
  - 3) When it comes down to it, THERE ARE ONLY TWO groups for all of mankind who have ever lived: JUST and UNJUST.
2. Not only is there ONLY ONE WAY, there is only ONE GOOD destination.
3. At the JD, **ALL** men will be raised (except those who are alive at His return)— John 5:28 **Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,**
4. Matthew 13:49 **So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,**
5. In Matthew 25, Jesus describes a great separation that will take place on that day, and for the UNJUST it will not be pleasant— Matthew 25:46 **And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.**
6. May I suggest to all of us here this morning, THERE IS NO MORE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION today than the condition of your souls and which group you fit into: JUST or UNJUST!

## One LESSON from Acts

**4. 3 GREAT THEMES for teaching others God's truth (25).**

Acts 24:25 And as he reasoned of **righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,** Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

1. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, if we want to have the kind of impact God's people had in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, we must listen and understand the content of their message.
2. When Paul REASONED with Felix and Drusilla, he was setting forth a protracted argument in defense of Christianity.
3. **RIGHTEOUSNESS**... Wayne Jackson... Likely had to do with the reason Christ had to die for humanity.
  - 1) That God's JUSTICE (a divine attribute) had to be satisfied (while at the same time His MERCY is extended.
  - 2) It also would include obedience to the commands of the Lord— Psalms 119:172 **My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.**
  - 3) It has to do with fulfilling one's obligations to both God and man (Mt 22.37-40).
  - 4) Of course, Felix was not accustomed to submitting to any authority except Rome and HIMSELF.

4. **TEMPERANCE... the opposite of unrestrained self-indulgence.**
  - 1) Kittel defines it: *so that there is no place for autonomous self-mastery.*
  - 2) To two adulterers, the concept would be very strange and perhaps one they never had even considered any need for it.
  - 3) It is a part of our message which will be most quickly rejected, likely, in our own time.
  - 4) Yet, here is Paul presenting it and setting out affirmative arguments to urge them to see its VALUE and IMPORTANCE.
5. **JUDGMENT TO COME... Paul did not just set before them logical arguments—he explained WHY they were imperative in the lives of these two.**
  - 1) There is coming a JUDGMENT DAY.
  - 2) It will be a DAY, whether they are alive or have died, in which they will join all who have ever lived to stand before Jesus to be judged (John 5.28).
  - 3) Surely Paul would have mentioned to them what would be the basis of this judgment...  
John 12:48 **He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.**
6. Whatever we can do today more effectively to present these three topics to our lost friends, neighbors, and relatives will be time and effort WELL SPENT.
7. **RIGHTEOUSNESS, SELF-CONTROL, & JUDGMENT TO COME.**

#### One LESSON from Acts

### 5. RESULTS of the kind of preaching done in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century (25).

- Acts 24:25 **And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.**
1. **Not only are we told the message Paul delivered to Felix and Drusilla, we are told something about the EFFECT it had on Felix.**
  2. **TREMbled... 25.256** ἔκφοβος, ον; ἔμφοβος, ον: pertaining to being extremely afraid—‘very frightened, terrified, very much afraid.’<sup>1</sup>
  3. **Luke could very well have used the plural form of the word to include Drusilla, but he DID NOT.**
    - 1) **Felix, in considering his life up to this point and his behavior, was scared to death to be confronted with the idea that he would some day stand before THE JUDGE.**
    - 2) **Perhaps Drusilla was not the least concerned about Paul’s message.**
      - 1- **It is possible to violate one’s conscience so frequently that there is not even a twinge of regret.**
      - 2- **1 Timothy 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;**
  4. **When we find someone who is moved the way Felix was that is a good thing.**
    - 1) **However, just being afraid of what the future holds is **not nearly enough.****
    - 2) **The person MUST be willing to make the necessary changes demanded by the gospel.**

#### One LESSON from Acts

<sup>1</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, [\*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains\*](#) (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 315.

**6. The SEARCH for a CONVENIENT SEASON may very well END UNFAVORABLY (25).**

Acts 24:25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; **when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.**

1. Unfortunately, the Bible does NOT reveal to us that Felix ever found that allusive CONVENIENT SEASON.
2. If we read the accounts of conversion in the Book of Acts, they all share something in common.
  - 1) One thing they share in common is an understanding of URGENCY.
  - 2) We do NOT read of 1<sup>st</sup> Century Christians “saving up requests for baptism” and then doing several of them at the same time AT A SO-CALLED BAPTISMAL SERVICE.
  - 3) NO, the message of Acts is we must OBEY NOW!
  - 4) WHAT IF IT WAS AT AN INCONVENIENT TIME?
    - 1- The Philippian Jailer wanted to be baptized.
    - 2- He was taken and baptized THE SAME HOUR OF THE NIGHT (Acts 16.33).
    - 3- What hour was that? –MIDNIGHT (Acts 16.26).
3. The REASON for the urgency? We do not know the HOUR of the Lord’s coming in JUDGMENT!

One LESSON from Acts

**7. There have ALWAYS been those willing to do WRONG to gain favor (27).**

Acts 24:27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, **willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.**

1. The phrase: WILLING TO SHOW THE JEWS A PLEASURE, is telling us Felix wanted to have a good feeling about his relationship to the Jews.
2. Well, that would certainly be a good idea if he wanted to keep his job.
3. There are always people who do EVIL things so that they may have the approval of men
4. Where are the people who do what they do for the approval of God Almighty?

Conclusion:

1. The Book of Acts is a helpful book for Christians.
2. We need to see it as a book revealing the history of our spiritual family.