

The Way They Call Heresy

By Tom Harding

Bible Text: Acts 24:14

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Now turn in your Bible once again to Acts chapter 24, Acts chapter 24 and let's read this one verse, Acts 24 verse 14, verse 14. And I am going to repeat this one phrase here often so we will ring in your ears today and for the days to come. "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 that are written in the law and in the prophets and have hope. I have hope. It is a good hope. I have hope toward God. I have hope toward God."

Now remember that Paul, Paul had been escorted out of town by 470 Roman soldiers and brought to Caesarea to stand before this governor Felix. Five days later the Jews were brought before Felix to bring charges against Paul.

Notice in the last part of verse one of this chapter they hired this Roman lawyer named Tertullus who butters up the governor and brags on how good he has been to them and he says that he is going to inform him, the governor, against Paul, against Paul. They bring this man who they hired to accuse and to slander Paul of which he says this in verse five. "We have found this man," speaking of God's servant, God's apostle, "We have found this man to be a pest. He is a bug. He is a cockroach. He is a worm. He is someone that is just a nuisance. He is a pest. He is someone who needs to be stamped out," is what he is saying. "He is a pest. He is not only that, but he is a mover. He is a mover of sedition. He is one who is causing great anarchy and against Rome and against the Caesars and all. He is a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world and he is a ring leader of this certain sect, this certain movement, this certain religious movement. He is a ring leader of this sect called the Nazarenes, the Nazarenes."

And he says, "We would have judged him according to our law, but we were stopped. We would have executed him according to our law, but your captain, your captain prevented us from executing this man according to our law."

Well, those Sanhedrin, these Ananias the high priest and those who were with him, the elders, when Tertullus had run his mouth and run his course, here is what they said, verse nine. "And the Jews said, 'Amen. Amen.'"

This...whatever Tertullus says we add a hearty amen. This man, he said, we despise...They said, we despise him.

Now in verse 10, down through verse 21 we have Paul's defense against these charges And he says this. "Of all which they accuse me they have no proof."

You see verse 13. They cannot prove these things because none of them are true. These things are all false. Neither can they prove these things whereof now they accuse me. They are false. But he says in verse 14, "This I confess unto thee, that the way which they call a lie, the way which they call false and the way which these Jews say that is in error, that is the way I worship God believing all things written, given of God. There is one thing I do confess that is true. That is true. The way they call heresy is the way I worship God believing all things written and given of God. I worship and believe the same things as," notice what it says, "So I worship the God of my fathers. I believe and worship the same God whom Abraham worshipped and believed."

Hold your place there and find John chapter eight.

"I worship the same God and the same way that my fathers worshipped God."

In John chapter eight verse 56, John 8:56 speaking of Abraham, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. And he saw it and he was glad."

Abraham's hope was the Lord Jesus Christ alone. And Paul was saying, "I worship the same way that Abraham approached God on the merit and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. "

Now stay right here in the book of John and find John chapter five. Paul is saying, "I worship and approach God the same way Moses did," in John chapter five. John chapter five, look at verse 43, verse 42, "But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you. I am come in my father's name and you receive me not. If another shall come in his own name, him will you receive. How can you believe which receive honor one of another and seek not the honor that cometh from God only? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one that accuseth you, even Moses whom you trust. For had you believed Moses," our Lord said, "You would have believed me. He wrote about me."

How did Moses and Abraham approach God? Through the merit and righteousness and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And that's what Paul is saying here. "The way they call heresy, that's the way I worship God."

I want you to find Acts chapter two. He is saying that I believe the same thing Abraham believed, worship the same way, the same way that Moses came, the same way that David came, the king of Israel in Acts chapter two. That's what he says over here in Acts chapter two.

"This Jesus," Acts 2:32, "This Jesus hath God raised up whereof we are all witnesses, resurrected Christ. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this which you now see and hear. For David is not ascended unto the heavens."

Does that mean that David didn't go to glory after he died? No. You read what is being saved in the context here. He is talking about the body of David. The body of the resurrected Lord went to glory. The body of David is still in the ground.

“For David's body didn't ascend into heaven, but he said this himself, ‘The Lord said unto my Lord, “Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.””

David's hope was the Lord Jesus Christ exalted enthroned. “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.”

He had a pretty strong argument, didn't he? The way of our fathers, Abraham....Boy, the revered Abraham. Abraham believed Christ and his salvation was totally in the Lord Jesus Christ. Moses, they revered the writings of Moses, but he said, “Moses' hope was Christ crucified alone.”

David, oh they revered David, the king of Israel. And he said, “David, rejoiced in the Lordship of Christ.” And he said, “He is my exalted Lord,” before God almighty.

Pretty good company, pretty good company. These self righteous, self serving, ungodly Jews considered Paul and all who believed his message the way of Christ alone, the way of the Word of God alone, the way of grace alone, faith alone to the glory of God alone, they considered Paul and all who believed that gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to be heretics, heretics.

And it is no strange thing that this same religious crowd called believers today heretics. Often some have referred to believers in our day as those Calvinists. I wear that title proudly. I do believe in what they the five points of Calvinism as they are revealed in the Scripture. That is, God's electing grace, irresistible calling, definite atonement, perseverance of the faith, those five things.

But believe...is it is no strange thing that this same religious crowd refers to...refer to believers who stand for the same gospel that Paul stood for, that Abraham stood for, that Moses stood for as heretics or they say, “Well, those Calvinists,” or they call those, you know, those sovereign gracers.

Believers, my friend, are not ashamed to own the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation. And I don't know what they call me. We used to have a saying when I was a little boy. Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me. You call me what you want. I am going to stand for the gospel of God's grace.

The believer is not ashamed to own the Lord Jesus as the only way of salvation. The apostle wrote to the Romans, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It is the very power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. Therein is that gospel is the righteousness of God, and that is Christ, revealed in that gospel, in that gospel.”

Now I want you to listen to me carefully. Now I am saying this to you because I am your friend. And I am sent of God. I believe I am sent of God to tell you the truth come flame or flood, hell or high water. Those who believe the gospel are not ashamed of the gospel. And they have no toleration, no toleration for that which does not honor Christ, none. There is no room for compromise whatsoever, no room for compromise. We have no toleration for that which does not honor Christ, about to lose our power.

I can still bring this message.

Now listen to me. If you do not hate, if you do not hate the false gospel, if you do not despise that gospel that is contrary to grace and the way of Christ you have no love for the truth. Is that being too hard?

Well, let's see what the Scripture says. Turn to Psalm 119. If you do not hate the false gospel, you do not love the truth. Two Scriptures here in Psalm 119. Psalm 119, verse 104. Psalm 119 verse 104. "How sweet," verse 103. "How sweet are thy words." Psalm 119, "unto my taste. Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Through thy precepts I get understanding therefore I..." You know I just...It's ok. No, I hate...I hate every false way."

Now it doesn't say we hate them. We are supposed to love our enemies. But he says we hate that false way. It is contrary to the Scripture.

Now turn over one page to verse 128. "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts, concerning all things to be right. Therefore I..." What does that say? I hate every false way. I hate it. I despise it. I despise that which is contrary to Christ."

Well, now you say, "That's unlovely."

Well, call it what you want. Turn to Galatians chapter one. In 1 Corinthians 16 it says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be anathema, Maranatha." And that means let him be damned. If any man love not Christ.

Look at Galatians chapter one verse six, Galatians 1:6. "For I marvel that you are so soon removed, so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, another gospel which is not another." There is just one gospel. "But there are some. There will be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ, change the gospel. Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than that which we preached, let him be..." And the word there literally is damned.

"As I said before so say I now again if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have received..."

Paul said this about...turn to Galatians five. Turn over here. I was looking at this earlier today, Galatians chapter five, verse 12. He says in verse 11, "If I yet preach circumcision

why do I yet...if I preach circumcision, why do I suffer persecution, then is the offense of the cross ceased. I would they were even cut off, cut off which trouble you.”

This church was troubled by those legalizers, those Judaizers that said, “Except you are circumcised you cannot be saved.” And it is the same message that people say today that except you be baptized a certain way into a certain organization that you cannot be saved.

Paul says, “I wish those people were cut off.”

He said in chapter two. “I am not going to give them...to whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour, for a moment, that the truth of God may continue with you.”

Now the way they call heresy, the way this very way this religious people in our day, the religious crowd in our day, man centered, works religion, free will, flesh glorifying, the way this very religious world calls heresy is the very way I worship and approach God and hold most dear, hold most dear as all my salvation.

Four things: salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. Secondly, salvation by the grace of God alone. Salvation received by faith, God given faith alone. Fourthly, salvation to the glory of God alone.

Now this religious world will call that heresy. That is the very way I worship and believe God. How about you? Is that the gospel you believe?

Let’s look at those four things. Salvation is of the Lord. Salvation is in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have studied this repeatedly. I have read it over and over. In Acts chapter four verse 12, “Neither is there salvation in any other than in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.” I am talking about the Christ of the Bible. I am not talking about a counterfeit. I am talking about the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is of the Lord alone and salvation is found in him and salvation is accomplished by him, by himself alone.

Now two things. Christ Jesus alone is our Savior. He said, “I am the way. I am truth. I am life. No man comes unto the Father, but by and through me.” Christ is the Savior alone. And salvation is found in him.

My pastor used to put it this way. Salvation is in a person. Salvation is you being vitally united to a living person, living Lord. Not to an organization, not to a church. I have never said salvation is in Zebulon Baptist Church. Have I ever said that? I have always told you and pointed you to salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Is that right, brother Charles?

Salvation is in him. I have never said salvation is in this church. Salvation is always in Christ, the Savior. Salvation is found in him, his person.

Now let me give you these Scriptures. Simeon when they brought the Lord Jesus to him to be circumcised he looked, took him up in his arms and said, "I thank God. Let me die now. Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Salvation is in a person. He was looking into Christ his face who is our Savior, who is salvation.

No wonder the apostle Paul said, "Oh," back before he counted all that religious stuff a Pharisee, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as touching the law blameless. And he said after he met the Lord he counted all those things but loss that he might win Christ and be found in him, found in Christ, in Christ alone.

John put it this way. "He that hath the Son, he that believeth on the Son hath life. He that believeth not the Son does not have life."

Peter put it this way. "To you who believe he is precious. He is everything. He is everything."

So I am saying that salvation is in this Lord Jesus Christ, in his person, in his person. And this salvation, secondly, this salvation not only in the Lord Jesus Christ, but this salvation is accomplished totally by him.

Now there is a work to be done in accomplishing our salvation. The law of God has to be honored. Sin has to be put away. How is that done? By something I do? Is salvation conditioned upon me? Has he done all that he can do and then the rest is up to me? Is salvation a...did he make salvation just a possibility or did he accomplish all of our salvation?

Well the Word of God says this when he prayed in John 17, "Father, I thank you. You have made me Lord of heaven and earth and I am going to give eternal life to as many as you have given me. And this is eternal life that they might know thee, the only true God Jesus Christ. I have finished the work you gave me to do. And now, oh Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." John 17:2-4.

He finished the work. He didn't make salvation a possibility if I meet certain conditions. That's not so. The Lord Jesus Christ is salvation is in him and accomplished by him, performed by him. Every precept of the law he honored it. The law has to be honored. Every precept of that law. He said, "I didn't come to destroy the law. I honor the law."

Did he get the job done?

God said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear him. Hear him."

Every penalty of that law had to be satisfied. The law of God says the guilty must die. The Lord Jesus Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us. He honored every precept of the law, every penalty of the law. The Lord Jesus Christ made full satisfaction, full...and the word is propitiation.

Now we have looked at this word repeatedly. 1 John 4:10. "Herein is love. Not that we love God, but that he loved us and that he gave his Son to be my sacrifice, my full payment." He is my reconciliation before God. He is blood atonement alone.

And the Lord Jesus Christ completed salvation, accomplished salvation himself, every precept, every penalty, full propitiation, full obedience, full obedience.

His obedience alone.

Turn to Romans five. Look at this. Romans five. Not my obedience, his, his obedience, completed and accomplished salvation. Romans five, verse 19. "Forasmuch...for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." There is Adam's ruin and Christ's restoration. Through his obedience we are made righteous.

You see the doctrine of representation. "In Adam all die. Even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound, but where sin abounded grace did much more abound that as sin hath reigned unto death even so might grace reign." There is sovereign grace, "Grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

So I am saying that this religious world calls that heresy. I am saying that is the very way I worship God. And by his grace are determined to preach this very message until I preach no more. Salvation is in the Lord, in *the* Lord Jesus Christ alone, not this one who wants to and can't, not this one who tried to and failed. That's a counterfeit. That's an imposter. I am talking about the Lord of Lords and King of Kings with whom we have to do.

Secondly, salvation is totally by the sovereign grace of God alone. Turn to Acts chapter 15 verse 11. Salvation is totally by the sovereign grace of God alone. Acts 15 verse 11. "But we believe through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." Through what? Through grace of the Lord Jesus we shall be saved even as they. God is going to save the Jew the same way he saves the Gentile, the same way any man will ever be saved by the sovereign grace of God alone. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy. It is God who saved us and called us. 2 Timothy 1:9>. It is God who saved us and called us, not according to our works, not according to our works. Have we ever heard that? But according to own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

Salvation, as it is revealed in Holy Scriptures, all of God's sovereign, electing, saving, calling fetching, quickening grace, sovereign grace. And to the total exclusion of any works or contribution on the part of the sinner. There's no conditions put upon me. None.

Blessed is that man to whom God would give righteousness without works.

Turn to Romans 11. Look at this here. Romans 11. There is a remnant, Romans 11, There is a remnant according...according to the election of grace. Romans 11 verse five. Even so, then, at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more works otherwise grace is not really grace. But if it be of works then it is no more grace. Otherwise work is no more work.

Grace would be meaningless, would it not? Grace would be meaningless if it is conditioned upon works. And yet the subtlety of wicked men, they have made grace to be conditioned upon your merit. They have made grace to be earned by something you do. And that's not grace. That's works. Mercy is not merited. Mercy is freely given. If grace and mercy is conditioned upon the sinner, then it is no longer grace.

I am saying that this book teaches, from cover to cover, Noah found what? Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And all the way to the end of the revelation they sing about of him who loved us and washed us from our sin in his own blood, to him be the glory both now and forever amen. What is that? That's grace. Salvation by grace.

Here is the third thing. This religious world that we live in...and don't tell me it is not religious. You rub elbows with them every day at work. And we bump up against them every day in our life. This religious world is opposed to salvation in Christ and grace alone. They call that heresy. I call that that's the way I worship God.

Are you with me? Ok.

Here's the third thing. Salvation is received by faith alone. Salvation is received by faith alone. Faith. Now what do we know about faith? Ok. Turn to Acts chapter 13. What do we know about faith? Well, faith is not something that blooms in our heart naturally. What is native to a fallen, darkened, depraved heart? Unbelief. Faith is something that Arthur Pink called exotic. It is something that is planted by the hand of God almighty and that blooms in the heart of a sinner made alive by the power of God. That's right.

Look what it says here. Faith is something special. Faith is something that is God given, God born, God produced. Acts 13, verse 38. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin." There, again, he is pointing salvation right back to Christ, through this man, through his atonement, through...see it is who he is that gives power to what he did. It is preached unto you that forgiveness of sin and by him all that...what does that say there? Believe...are justified from all things which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe and those who do believe, they do so because they are born of God. Faith is the fruit of life. 1 John 5:1. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." We don't believe to be born. We believe as the fruit of an the effects of life in Christ Jesus.

Faith, my friend, is a gift of God. That is what the Scriptures teach. It is God given. It is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast. Faith does embrace truth. It does. Faith embraces not a lie, not saving faith.

Turn to Titus chapter one. Faith embraces truth. Faith believes truth. The same as repentance. They acknowledge and believe and receive the truth. Titus 1:1. Faith is a gift of God. Faith does embrace truth. Titus 1:1, "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect..." The faith of who? The faith of God's elect and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness. It glorifies God in all things. The faith of God's elect acknowledges that salvation is of the Lord, of the Lord alone. Faith is a gift of God. Faith embraces the truth. Well, how important is faith? Without faith it is impossible to please God. Romans 11:6. A man who is without faith is a man without Christ. The man without Christ is a man without salvation. So faith is very important, isn't it?

Not only that, faith has one foundation. Faith has one... true saving faith, the faith of God's elect is not based upon feeling or emotion. It is based upon "thus saith the Lord." We believe because God had said it to be so. Faith has one foundation. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Faith has but one object. Faith is not subjective. That is, saving faith doesn't look inwardly, "Oh, I just feel saved."

My friend, honestly, most of the time I don't because faith doesn't look inwardly. Faith is objective. Faith looks to Christ the Savior. That is my confidence. I have no confidence in the flesh. I look to him. Saving faith has one object, the exalted, victorious king who did not fail to accomplish all of God's purpose, one object. And saving...true saving faith has this attribute as well. It does not quit. It does not quit.

Turn to Hebrews 11. You have Titus there. Hebrews chapter three I want, Hebrews chapter three.

Faith perseveres because faith...we are kept by the power of God through faith. Faith perseveres. It does not quit. You can't run a believer off. The only way you can run a believer off from a local ministry is if the preacher would stop preaching grace. They'll leave. They will find somebody else. But when the preacher keeps harping on grace then preaching grace you can't run the sheep of Christ off.

I'm not concerned about it.

Look what it says here in Hebrews three verse 12. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief departing from the living God."

You see, saving faith perseveres because we are kept by the power of God through faith. Salvation is received by believing, not doing. Those justified live by faith.

Four times it say sin the Word of God...I want you to find 2 Corinthians 13. Turn and read this with me. 2 Corinthians 13. It is written four times in the Word of God, "The just live by faith, faith."

You see the glorious qualities is God given. It's God given. It is a gift of God.

Now we are exhorted here in 2 Corinthians chapter 13 verse five. Now what does that say there? Examine yourself whether you are in the faith, the faith, the faith. Prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you accept you be a reprobate?

Now this religious world that you live in, that I live in, they call these things that we love, that I preach, they call these things heresy. The way of salvation in Christ alone, the way of salvation by the grace of God alone, the way of salvation by faith alone. They call that heresy.

You say, "Well, no they don't."

Yes, they do. Ask them. And they will condemn you as they have condemned my ministry. They have condemned my message and they condemned everyone sitting here and listening to me. Just recently one of their preachers told me those very things.

My friend, we are preaching the gospel and I am going to stand and keep harping on this message until somebody hears it. God help me. And if you are looking for something else, if you are looking for somebody, some kind of social club or somebody to make you feel better, I want to be your friend, but I am going to be your friend and I am going to tell you the truth. That is what friends do. They tell the truth. And I am going to stand for the truth.

Lastly, salvation is to the glory of God alone, to the glory of God alone. That is the bottom line and that is a discerning spirit of that which is true and that which is false. Who gets the glory?

Now if God has done all that he can do and you must do this, you must do that or you must come here, you must join with us, we have it to give. We give these things. Who gets the glory in that? Come on, now. Boy, look what I have done.

You see, my friend, God has so designed salvation that he rightly gets all the honor and glory for all of salvation. The grand design of all that God does is his glory in creation, in providence and in salvation. It is to his glory.

I find Galatians six, to his glory. The enemies of the gospel they call this heresy. You mean to God's glory alone? That's why the apostle Paul wrote here in Galatians 6:14, "But God forbid, God help us. God forbid," Galatians 6:14, "That I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world."

They call, this religious world calls that heresy. My friend, I confess, this is the way I worship God. Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone to the glory of God alone. This is the way I worship God. This is the way believers call the gospel. This is the way believers call truth, believe truth, life and salvation in Christ. This is the way I worship. Believe and have hope toward God. That's what he says here. I have hope toward God through Christ Jesus.