

"Am I A True Believer?"

Acts 24:14

A television broadcast sermon delivered

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By

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If you would like to follow along, we will be in the Book of Acts today. Acts chapter 24. Acts chapter 24. While you're finding that place, I'll just tell you a few things here. And the first thing is this: The scripture, the Word of God, is very specific. Do we realize that? The scripture is very specific. What is said in the Word of God is very exact, very, very specific, but mankind has a way of generalizing things. That's man's doing. Man has a way of generalizing things, and generalizing can be very dangerous. Very dangerous. God's true people do not want a general religion. Some people are okay with a general religion. Some people do not really care about specifics. Some people really do not worry about it, they just kind of wanna be under the blanket of religion, and that's good enough. That's fine enough. That's not how it is for God's people. Not God's true people. They do not want a general religion. They do not want to generally know what God has said in his Word. They wanna know specifically. Specifically. The world is fine with the general knowledge, a general understanding. We can go here, we can go there. It's all about the same. That's not God's people. That is not God's people at all. They want to know specifically who it is they are worshiping. They wanna know specifically what he has to say. And they wanna know if he is saying it specifically to them. That's what God's

people want to know. All of God's people are this way. All of them. He puts that heart and that desire in all of them. All of them. They search for the details. They want the truth. They want the truth at all costs no matter how condemning it is to their flesh. And I can speak on my own behalf to you. I want to know the truth of what God has to say about me, even if it condemns me, enslaves me in the sin of my flesh. That's how I feel about it. I pray you feel the same way. God's people want to know the truth no matter how exposing it is of their sin. That's what this Word does. It exposes our sin. They want the truth no matter how much it strips them of their pride and ability. That's what the truth of this Word does. They want it no matter how much it causes them to decrease in God's eyes and in their own eyes. The more we read in God's Word, the more we will decrease in God's eyes and in our own eyes. No matter how much the honesty of the Word strips them of all credit, this Word says we don't get any credit. It strips us of all glory and anything concerning salvation, anything and everything, from the decision of it. Even just the decision of salvation, the Word strips us of that. To the execution of it, to the obtaining of it. No matter how contrary the truth of God's Word is to the flesh of men, God's people want it. They want the truth. They're not satisfied to have a general understanding of God and a general understanding of what saved them and what saves sinners. They're not satisfied with a general form of religion. They wanna get to the heart of these things. And there's a particular subject that I wanna do that with right now. There's something that is very generalized in religion, and I want us to look at it specifically. And it's this right here. What is it to be a believer? What is it to be a believer? The general acknowledgement of whether or not a person is religious is whether or not he or she is a believer. The way we gauge whether someone is religious is we find out whether or not they are a believer. You ask people point blank, "Are you a believer?" And some will tell you, some would say, "No, I don't believe any of that. I don't believe the Bible. I don't believe in God. I don't believe any of that." All right, that's not a religious person. Person's not religious. Most people, though, would say, "Oh, yes, I'm a believer. Absolutely. I'm a

religious person." Every child of God will say that. You ask a child of God, "Are you a believer?" Oh, yes, I'm a believer. But a child of God will not be satisfied with a general understanding of what that means. And that's probably a good way to respond to that question. If someone says, "Are you a believer?" the best response really ought to be, "What do you mean by that question?" rather than just throwing it into a general umbrella. A true child of God will want to get to the heart of it. He or she will want to get to the root of the issue, and they will ask themselves, a true child of God will ask their own self, "A believer of what? A believer in what? A believer on what?" Is a general belief in God enough? You know, people just think about just God. You know, is a general belief in God enough? Is what I believe about God correct? This is what a true believer will ask himself or herself. Is what I believe about God correct? What is it to truly be a believer? What does a believer believe? Am I one of them? Am I one of them? How can I know if I'm a believer? A child of God will specifically want the answer to that? Well, we're gonna go ahead and answer that question, and then we're gonna prove it with the Word, all right? The Apostle Paul is on trial right here in Acts 24 for preaching the gospel. That's the reason why. He's on trial for preaching the gospel. And they gave him an opportunity to speak on his own behalf to defend himself, and this is what he said. If you look at verse 10, Acts 24:10, "then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, 'Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself,' Paul said. 'Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but 12 days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.'" Verse 14 says, "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." He said, "I'm gonna lay it all out there for you. I'm gonna make a confession to you after the way which they call heresy." That

means division. That's what it means. Division. They grabbed Paul. They detained him. They said, "Why are you preaching this? You're creating division. All you're doing is causing division in what you're doing. You're ruffling the feathers. You're troubling the waters. Why are you doing this?" Verse 14: This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy. They call it. It's not really heresy. "But 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." He said, "Why am I preaching this? Because I have to. I have to. I'm a believer. I have to. I'm a believer." What does a believer believe? All things which are written in the law and in the prophets. We talk about believing on Christ. Okay? We say it all the time. You hear it all the time. Believing on Christ. Well, to believe on Christ is to believe his Word. This is the Word of Jesus Christ. It was inspired by the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, the spirit of Christ. It is to believe on the particular person of Jesus Christ. That is what it is to believe on him. It's to believe the pages of his Word. That's what Paul just said. The only way we can know the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is by knowing his Word and believing his Word. The spirit reveals Christ to his people through the Word. This is how we can know him. That's what determines whether or not a person is a true believer. If you show a man something in the Word of God, this has happened many times, I've witnessed this so many times, you show a man or a woman something in the Word of God, and he responds by saying, "I don't believe that," that person is not a believer. That person is just not a believer. But if you show a man something, and he says, "Huh, well, there it is. If God wrote it in his Word, it must be so." If that is a man or a woman's response, he or she is a believer. A believer believes all things which are written in the Word of God. Now, let me emphasize that. A believer believes all things which are written in the Word of God. A believer does not believe part of the things which are written in the Word of God. That's where everybody goes wrong. That's what denominations are built on, believing part of the things that are written in the Word of God. That's not a true believer. A true believer believes all things. A believer does not believe

most of the things written in the Word of God. A believer believes all things. All things. A believer does not just believe the things that he or she can understand. And I wanna emphasize that, and I'll tell you there are many things in here I don't understand. But if God wrote it, amen. I believe it. By God's grace, by his faith given, I believe it. It doesn't matter whether we understand it or not. God said it. His ways are higher than our ways. God's people believe it. All of it. Turn with me, if you would, to Matthew 4. If you have your Bibles there, turn over to Matthew chapter four. This is when our Lord was tempted in the wilderness, and he was hungry, and the adversary said, "Why don't you turn those stones into bread?" All right, verse four. Matthew 4:4: Our Lord answered, but he answered and said, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Every word. Every word. Somebody says, "Well, I don't understand that. I don't understand what that's saying." It doesn't matter. It does not matter. Well, I just don't know if I can go along with that. Again, that doesn't matter. Whether a person goes along with it or doesn't go along with it, that's irrelevant. This is God we're talking about. This is God. And a true believer will believe God Almighty's word no matter what. Now, are we believers? You and I, are we believers? Let's see what he has said in his Word, and then let's see if we believe it, okay? Turn with me to Ephesians 2. Ephesians 2:8 says, "For by grace." Grace means gift, free gift, favor from God, God's doing. "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Believing is faith. That's what believing is. Faith. If we have the ability to believe, it's because we have faith. And the Word of God says, "Faith is not of ourselves: it is the gift of God." Most people believe, many people believe, that faith is their faith. You know, they'll say, "You need to exercise your faith." Most people believe faith is their own faith. It's not. Faith is not of ourselves. That means it doesn't come from, it doesn't originate with us. It's not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. All right, Hebrews 12 says, "He, God, is the author and the finisher of our faith." Our ability to believe, he is the author. Think about what that means. The author is the one who wrote it, started it. The

finisher is the one who finished it. Our ability to believe on him. He is the author, it is in his hands, and we are at his mercy. That's what that means. He's the author and the finisher of it. We're at his mercy. The scripture says, "Whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." But the scripture also says, "We do not have that ability of faith in ourselves to do that." God must give that faith to us, and God must perform that faith in us. If we end up being true believers, God did that. That's what it means. And he gets the credit for our believing on him. And he gets the glory for our believing on him. He gets the credit and the glory for all of our faith. We can't even brag about the fact that we're believers. We can't brag to anybody about the fact that we're believers. He made us to be that way. Being a believer is his decision. If he's the author of it, if it's not of ourselves, but the gift of him, okay, being a believer is his decision. It is his work. It is his doing. We cannot even decide whether or not we're going to be a believer. That's how bad a shape man is. Talk about spiritually dead. That's a good definition of spiritually dead. Cannot even decide, do not even have the ability to decide, whether or not we're gonna be a believer. That's what the Word of God says. All of it is in his hands. Again, verse eight says, "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Now, that's what the scripture says. Here's our question: Do we believe it? That's what the scripture says. Do we believe it? Faith is not of ourselves. It's the gift of God. Do we believe that, really? A true believer will. A true believer will. He or she will say, "It is God which worketh in me, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." That's Philippians 2:13. It's God who's doing it. Turn with me over to Psalm 14. Psalm 14:1 says, "The fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.'" There is none that doeth good. Now, who is he talking about? He's talking about everybody. He's talking about all of mankind from all generations. He's talking about me. Psalm

14 is about me. He's talking about you. Verse two says, "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of man, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Now, here's our question. Really, do we believe that? Do we believe that? Or do we say, "Well, now wait a minute. Hold on now. I mean, it can't be that there are none that doeth good. Wait a minute"? I did not come up with this. If you have your Bible there, you see, just like I do, God said this. People say, "I don't know. I can't believe that there's none that doeth good." If I say that, I'm not a believer. If I do not believe what God has to say about me, in my sinful, wretched flesh, then I'm not a believer. A true believer will cry, "Amen. Oh, wretched man that I am." Oh, wretched man that I am. The Apostle Paul was a believer. Turn with me to 1 Timothy 3. 1 Timothy 3:16 says, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up in the glory." Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh. God is the one that came down. That's what 1 Timothy 3:16 says. Not just God's son, not just God's son, not just God's helper, not just God's representative. God was manifest in the flesh. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word," speaking of Christ, "and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." God is three persons. It's not that the father is God and then the son and the spirit are not God. That's not it at all. Those three equal persons collectively are God. Three equal persons: the father of God, the Son of God, the spirit of God. God the father, God the son, God the spirit. These three are one, and these three agree in one. All the fullness of God is seen in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. All of it. If you wanna see God the father, look at Jesus Christ. If you wanna see God the son, look at Jesus Christ. If you wanna see God the spirit, look at Jesus Christ. Isaiah 9:6 says, "Unto us a child is born." Call his name the counselor. That's the spirit. Call his name the everlasting father. That's the father. Call his name the prince of peace. That's Christ, the son, the

Messiah. Well, who is he? Is he God the father, is he God the son, or is he God the spirit? Here's what a true believer will say. Yes. Yes. If you've seen him, you've seen the father, the son, and the spirit. Do we believe that? True believer will. Over in Hebrews chapter one, verse one says, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Verse three says, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of God's person, the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high." Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, by himself. And that's what I want to emphasize here. By himself purged the sin of his people. They did not help him. We did not help him. This Word says God's people did not give him permission to do it. They did not accept it, thereby making it effectual to them. They had no role in the matter whatsoever. By his own blood, the Lord Jesus Christ entered into the holy place of God and offered one sacrifice for the sin of all of his people throughout all generations, throughout all the end of the world. And by that one sacrifice of himself, he purged, he wiped out, he cleaned out, emptied, the sin of his people forever. Forever. He did that by himself forever. There's nothing that God's people can do. Christ already did it. Already did it, by himself. It's finished. Now, here's our question: Do we believe that? A true believer will. He or she will say, "It is not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy. He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." He did it. Now, let me see if I have time to give you one more. Go to John 11 here. I'll be very quick. John 11. This is where Lazarus had just died, and the Lord has come, and he's speaking to Martha. And in John 11:23, Jesus said unto her, "Thy brother shall rise again. Martha said unto him, 'I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.' Jesus said unto her, 'I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth

and believeth in me shall never die.'" And then he said to Martha, "Believest thou this?" He said, "Martha, are you a true believer? Believest thou this?" Verse 27, "She said unto him, 'Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.'" She said, "I most certainly do. I believe. I believe you're the Christ. I believe all life is in you. I believe all hope is in you. I believe." Do we? A true believer will. May God give that faith to us and cause us to truly believe on Christ and believe every word he has written. Amen.