

# GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

## Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide SB 10.10.2021

### STRIVE TO ENTER THE REST: ACTS 24

#### Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

We should get to know our Biblical calendar. We are in the year of Shmitah, a year of rest. It is also the month of Cheshvan, the second month of the Jewish calendar. It was during this month the rains of judgement began to fall and God flooded the earth for 40 days and nights. But God used Noah, whose name means rest, to build an ark to save eight souls. Then on the 17th day of the seventh month, the ark rested on Mount Ararat. It was on the 17th day of seventh month, the Israelites passed over the Red Sea. It was on the 17th day of the seventh month Christ, our Lord, rose from the dead. We have a rest in Jesus, the Ark of our salvation. Jesus said, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30). We should strive to enter the rest Jesus offers. Let's get into our study....

1. Have you ever gone on a vacation or slipped away for a weekend getaway and experienced the sensation of rest? Describe the experience.
2. With all the craziness in the world, how do we find rest in Jesus?
3. What stood out to you during this week's study?

#### Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

#### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 24:1-21

Ananias, the high priest, along with some members of the Sanhedrin came down from Jerusalem and hired a professional prosecutor named Tertullus to testify against Paul. He started his accusation by flattering the governor. He then accused Paul of several twisted half-truths to include inciting dissension, leading a new and unlawful sect, and desecrating the temple. When Paul was given an opportunity to speak, Paul then gave a skilled and wise defense. He addressed the governor with courtesy, but not with insincere flattery as Tertullus did. Paul then explained how it was still only 12 days since he had come to Jerusalem and how five days had already passed since he arrived in Caesarea. There wasn't enough time for him time to stir up riots or a revolution. Nor was there enough time for the Jews to thoroughly investigate him on these charges. Furthermore, Paul explained how he came to worship in the Temple, not to defile it. In no case did the Jews find him stirring up crowds in the temple. Paul was not denying there had been riots, but he was simply claiming Christianity was the continuation of the faith recorded in the Law and the Prophets. Those who had rejected this good news were the ones who stirred the crowds. Paul further challenged his accusers by saying that in no way could they prove these false accusations.

1. Compare Paul's introduction (24:10) to Tertullus's (24:2-3). How are they different, and why?
2. Describe the attitudes and emotions Paul seemed to have as he defended himself. What do you learn about him that is worthy of imitation?
3. Why was it so important for Paul to keep a clear conscience before God and man (24:16)? Should this be important to us? If so, why? How should we show it?
4. What should we do when there are accusations against us? (John 8:32).
5. Why is it important to us that Paul claimed Christianity was not something new, but the true continuation of the faith recorded in the Law and the Prophets?

#### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 24:22-27

## **Visitation/Restoration in 2021**

In view of the lack of evidence, Felix should have set Paul free. Instead, he compromised and put Paul on “house arrest” and allowed Paul’s friends to freely visit and minister to him in any way at any time. At first it may have been hard for Paul to see how continued “house arrest” in Caesarea fit in with God’s purpose. But part of Paul’s mission was to testify before rulers (9:15). After some time, he had an opportunity to witness to Felix and his wife. There is no doubt Paul told Felix all about the life and teachings of Jesus, as well as His death, resurrection, and second coming; however, when Paul began talking about righteousness, self-control, and the judgement to come Felix became terrified. He resisted the Spirit’s conviction and told Paul to go for now. Felix was motivated by greed. The real reason he wanted to see Paul was in hopes of receiving a big bribe from him. These conversations with Paul continued over a 2-year period. Then, Felix was replaced by Porcius Festus, who arrived in 59 AD. Because Felix sought the favor of the Jews, he left him imprisoned.

6. Put yourself in Paul’s place in 24:23-26. Would you have tried to raise money to buy your way out of prison, or would you have preached to Felix? What does this tell you about Paul and yourself?
7. Paul allowed Jason to pay bond to release him from jail (17:9), but he refused to pay a bribe to be released by Felix (see 24:26). Why do you think the first was acceptable but the last was not?
8. Read Jer. 48:11-12. The prophet Jeremiah speaks of God sending the ‘Zoim’, or wine trippers to change the Spiritual Aroma. How was God using Paul as a Zoim? How can we be a Zoim for others?
9. God knows when it is necessary to leave behind the old dregs and put the wine in new vessels. If the wine stays in the old vessel, it becomes bitter. Are there instances where God has used a Zoim in your life to change the Spiritual Aroma? Provide some examples.
10. Why was Felix terrified with the discussions of righteousness, self-control, and the judgement to come? How does the world respond to the discussions of righteousness, self-control, and the judgement to come? Why?

### **Applying God’s Word**

**What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.**

Paul was placed on “house arrest”. He was able to make best use of the time. In fact, some commentators suggest Paul may have written Hebrews during this restful time. Hebrews has many scriptures referencing back to rest (Hebrews 3:16-19, 4:1-3, 4:9-10, 4:11). Paul understood that we have a new identification in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) and was able to rest in the love, joy, peace, and hope found in Jesus. In the same way, we should strive to enter the rest of Jesus. This requires us to be diligent in obtaining that rest. We must also be diligent to make sure that our only hope is in Jesus. Not in the ways of this world, but in the finished work Jesus completed on the cross. Rest is not inactivity but harmonious involvement in God’s program. To enter God’s rest is to enter into God’s best for you.

1. What are the things preventing you from entering into God’s rest?
2. How might a time of “house arrest” be an active time of harmonious involvement in God’s program for you?
3. How will you strive to enter the rest of Jesus this week?

### **PRAYER**

Thank You for loving us so much that You gave Your only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Thank You that we do find a divine rest in You through our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You for the love, joy, peace, and hope found only in You. Lord, help us to rest in the victory that You have already provided us. For You have already won the battle for us.

*“Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.” (Hebrews 4:11)*