

REASONING WITH THE LOST

The account of Paul's visit before Felix, the governor, is found in Acts 24. It tells us that Paul spoke to this high official and "reasoned with him of righteousness, self-discipline and judgment to come." That was his three-point sermon outline, but it doesn't give us too many details. But it is certainly a great message that we can present to the lost today. *Righteousness* is being right with God. It comes not from our adherence to the law, but the New Testament teaches us it comes through Jesus Christ, the righteous one, who paid the penalty for our sins. We become right when we accept Christ as Lord and Savior.

Then, of course, our life must be characterized by *self-discipline*, controlling our natural urges, our temptations to sin or stray from the path to which God has called us to live in service. Certainly Felix's life had gone in a completely opposite direction of this to which Paul spoke.

He reasoned with him about *the coming judgment*. Why do righteousness or self-control even matter? Because of the coming judgment when we will be held accountable by our Creator. This is what must awaken us to the reality of our need to take action- accept Christ and live a disciplined life.

Felix heard all this and responded with the same excuse many offer today- saying basically- What you're saying Paul may be reasonable, but I'm not ready to do anything right now. When I have a "convenient time" I will call you.

Christianity was not and is not a matter of "convenience." In fact, for us humans and our nature, it can be terribly inconvenient. But it is a "reasonable" religion when you consider those key issues of Righteousness, Self-Control, and the Coming Judgment.

Will you act now, convenient or not? Paul later says- Now is the day of salvation Now is the acceptable time.

If you have not received Jesus as Savior and Lord, the stories of the book of Acts make it clear how people responded to the message. They believed the word that was spoken concerning Jesus, repented of their sins with the resolve to change, confessed their belief and trust in Jesus and were baptized into him for forgiveness of sins to rise and walk in a new life. You are now a Christian-a follower of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament epistles are written to help us then live that Christian life we have chosen.