

ALMOST THOU PERSUADEST ME
TO BE A CHRISTIAN

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TEXT:

“And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.” (Acts 26:24-29)

INTRODUCTION.:

1) The words of verse twenty-eight are familiar words to us. (In fact there is a song: "Almost Persuaded").

2) Context.

(1) Paul had been arrested (Jews).

(2) In order to save his life, he appealed to Caesar.

(3) Festus (governor) wanted King Agrippa to hear Paul.

(4) **Paul's defense** - “Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself: I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.” (Acts 26:1-7)

(a) **Relates his past**, “ Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself: I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;

Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"

(Acts 26:1-8)

(b) Christ had appeared to Paul.

(c) Paul was obedient.

(d) Festus accuses Paul of being mad, "And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." (Acts 26:24-25)

(e) Directly appeals to Agrippa, "For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner." (Acts 26:26)

3) In King Agrippa's reply he said, "Almost..."

4) Today take the phrase, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," and analyze it (great lesson for us).

I. "ALMOST"

1) Idea of with just a little (not far from obeying gospel).

2) King Agrippa mentally accepted the fact of Jesus Christ.

3) He is now confronted with decision.

4) Reply - Almost!

5) Reminded of the rich young ruler - "But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." (Matthew 19:22)

6) Have you thought about becoming a Christian?

(1) Being restored?

(2) "Almost."

7) To remain in the "almost state," is to **BE LOST!**

II. THOU PERSUADEST

1) How does one become a Christian?

2) Is it through some "feeling" or "experience?"

3) NO - through teaching.

(1) "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

(John 6:44-45)

(2) "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

(Matthew 28:18-20)

4) Word - "persuadest" - to convince by use of argumentation.

5) God has given us His words - ought to be convinced.

(1) Remember rich man in torment wanted five brothers to be warned. "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."

(Luke 16:26-28)

(2) Abraham said they had Moses and the prophets. "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

(Luke 16:29-31)

III. ME

1) Salvation concerns the **individual**.

2) Are **you** saved? Are **you** a Christian?

3) God is concerned with the individual (lost sheep, etc.).

4) "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24) - individual.

IV. TO BE A CHRISTIAN

1) If King Agrippa had obeyed Paul's teaching, what would he have become? **A CHRISTIAN!**

2) What kind of Christian? **JUST A CHRISTIAN!**

3) Question - if people obey just the word - what would they become? **JUST A CHRISTIAN!**

4) That being the case, then one must obey something other than the Word to become a denominationalist!

5) This is the divine name.

(1) "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name." (Isaiah 62:2)

(2) "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11:26)

(3) "Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?" (James 2:7)

(4) "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." (1Peter 4:16.)

CONCLUSION:

1) We don't know that Agrippa **ever** became a Christian!

2) What about you?

(1) Do you believe the word of God?

(2) What is your answer?

3) To be "**Almost**" a Christian is to **not** be a Christian.