

**ALMOST THOU PERSUADEST ME
TO BE A CHRISTIAN**
Acts 26:24-29

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Almost a sad word, most people almost do God's will
 - 1. Cain Gen 4:3; Heb 11:4
 - 2. Moses in Num 20:1-12
 - 3. The Rich Young Ruler Mk 10:17-22
 - 4. The five foolish virgins Matt 25:1-13
- B. King Agrippa made this statement "**Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.**"
- C. Let's examine this statement carefully word by word and see what is taught here; what lessons can we learn from the way this statement is worded.

DISCUSSION:

- I. **ALMOST** (a little less than) **defeats doctrine of faith only** ("Wherefore, that we are justified by faith, only, is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort" - *Book of Discipline of United Methodist Church*, 1972 Edition, p. 55.)

- A. Agrippa had already believed but wasn't saved
 - 1. Paul asked: "Believest thou the prophets"
 - 2. I know that thou believest Acts 26:27
 - 3. Paul wished they were Christians like himself
- B. Rulers believed but wouldn't confess him Jhn 12:42
- C. Don't confess him he won't confess us Matt 10:32
- D. Devils believe and tremble Jas 2:19

- II. **THOU** (Defeats doctrine of direct operation of H.S. (We believe . . . that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind, that is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the Holy Spirit - Standard Manual for Baptist Churches, by Hiscox).

- A. "Thou" represents a man (Paul) Word proclaimed to Agrippa - individual must take action
- B. Paul had the best opportunity to be saved in this manner Acts 22:6-16
 - 1. "Go to Damascus" Be told what he **MUST DO**
 - 2. Prayed and fasted for three days but not saved
 - 3. Man (Ananias) came and told him what to do
 - 4. "now why tarriest thou arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins." Acts 22:16
- C. Holy Spirit does not operate in salvation separate and apart from the word.

- III. **PERSUADEST ME** (defeats mourners bench salvation) ("sinner's prayer" Billy Graham made popular)

- A. Some have idea God must be persuaded to save

- 1. God no respecter of person 2Pet 3:9; Acts 10:34,35
- 2. Would have all men to be saved 1Tim 2:4

- B. Paul said: "knowing therefore the terror of the Lord **WE PERSUADE MEN**" 2Cor 5:11

- C. God has done his part 2Cor 5:20,21

- 1. Made him to be sin for us who knew no sin
- 2. God did beseech you by us, be ye reconciled to God

- IV. **TO BE** (Shows Action) **defeats "getting religion"** (the phrase "seeking" or "getting religion"...not now confined to the Methodist community – Millennial Harbinger Vol 1 No 6)

- A. Religion of Christ is not something one gets

- B. Christianity is a religion of practice

- 1. He that **doeth** the will of the Father Matt 7:21
- 2. Why call ye me Lord Lord and **DO NOT** the thing which I say Lk 6:46

- C. Jesus set the example Acts 1:1 "The former treatise have I made O Theophilus of all that Jesus began both to **DO** and teach."

- D. James shows that religion is not a matter of getting, but one of doing Jas 1:26,27

- V. **A CHRISTIAN** (defeats "nothing in name" (Abraham Lincoln – "calling a calf's tail a leg does not make it a leg" – Shakespeare's "a rose by any other name would smell just as sweet)

- A. Remission of sins in his name Lk 24:47

- B. Salvation in his name Acts 4:12

- C. Glorify God in his name 1Pet 4:16 (**Christian**)

- D. Agrippa was not almost persuaded to be called by some man-made name

- E. Wearing man's name causes division 1Cor 1:10-13

- F. Early disciples called Christians Acts 11:26

CONCLUSION:

- A. There is no evidence that Agrippa ever became fully persuaded to be a Christian
- B. If he wasn't, this means he passed from this life without hope lost forever suffering throughout eternity
- C. He had a wonderful opportunity to do God's will and be a Christian
- D. Don't make same mistake today; you have opportunity, take advantage of it by obeying the Gospel today.

**Song: "Almost cannot avail -- almost is but to fail;
sad, sad, that bitter wail -- almost but lost."**

(Idea for lesson from Gospel Guide 1970)