

096 - Become a Christian As I Am - Acts 26:26-32 - 2013-12-08

Call to Worship: Matthew 16:24

Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 18:17-39

Sermon: "Become a Christian As I Am" Acts 26:26-32

Benediction: Revelation 22:21

"I beg you patiently to listen to me, as I say what the prophets and Moses said, that Christ would suffer and rise from the dead, which is speech true and reasonable, that you may become a Christian as I am."

Read the text: Acts 26:24-32

I. The Preacher Begged His Hearers Patiently to Listen to Him, but there Certainly Are People Who Refuse to Listen Patiently to the Gospel (24)

- A. We looked into this last time
- B. This is not the situation here today

II. There Are Other People Who Do Listen Patiently to the Gospel

- A. they are willing to let us speak freely about the gospel (26a)
 - 1. they are conversant in these matters
 - 2. they do not think us crazy for talking about them
 - 3. this is most of you here, right?
- B. they know about the key events of redemptive history (26b)
 - 1. they have not escaped their attention because they were not done in a corner
 - a. this is the nature of God's works of redemption---they were not done secretly, but with the knowledge of many people, and with the recording of them in reliable historical accounts
 - 2. what things was Paul talking about specifically, that King Agrippa knew about because they were not done in a corner?
 - a. John the Baptist to preach that people should repent, because the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, and the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world has come in Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ
 - b. the many miraculous signs given by Jesus of Nazareth
 - c. Jesus' innocent death, and reports that He was risen from the dead
 - d. Paul's conversion to Christianity at Damascus and his long preaching ministry all over that part of the world
 - e. Agrippa already knew about these things
- C. they even believe in the bible (27)
 - 1. Paul knows that Agrippa believes the bible to be true; Paul puts it to Agrippa that the bible he believes points to Jesus Christ; one who believes the bible should trust in Jesus Christ
 - 2. I know that you listening patiently to me today believe the bible to be true. I put it

to you that if you believe the bible to be true, you surely must trust yourself entirely to Jesus Christ!

a. Do you believe that God saved certain ones of the human race from the great flood by Noah's ark? I know you do believe!

i. Then believe also that Jesus is Noah and the ark; a great destruction is coming on the world at the last day; through His perfect life, His sacrificial death, and His resurrection, He has built and provisioned an ark,

ii. believe in Him; come enter into Christ as the animals entered the ark, that you may be saved from the wrath of God to come

b. Do you believe that God saved the family of Jacob from the great famine by the grain Joseph stored up in Egypt? I know you do believe!

i. Then believe also that Jesus is Joseph and the grain; Jesus was betrayed by His brothers and cast down into the dungeon of the earth, but God raised him up and made him ruler over all His kingdom;

ii. trust in Christ; come to him for living bread as Joseph's brothers came to him for grain, that you may not perish, but have everlasting life

c. Do you believe that God saved the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt by Moses? I know you do believe!

i. Then believe also that Jesus is the passover lamb, whose blood saved the Israelites from the death of the firstborn; Jesus is the rock in the wilderness that gushed forth water when the people were thirsty; Jesus is the manna from heaven that fed the people when they were hungry;

ii. trust in Christ; spread his blood upon the door of your heart; follow Him up out of slavery; drink His living water; eat His living bread from heaven

d. Do you believe that God made David and Solomon kings over Israel? I know you do believe!

i. Then believe also that Jesus is David our king, who gives us the victory over Goliath and all of our enemies; Jesus is Solomon our king, who builds the Lord's temple, that we may worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness

ii. submit yourself to the rule of Christ; bow the knee to Him as King of Kings

f. Do you believe that Isaiah prophesied Emmanuel would come, "God with us"? Do you believe that Isaiah said the one who came would be wounded for our transgressions? that because we have gone astray, the Lord would lay on Him the iniquities of us all? I know you do believe!

i. Then believe also that Jesus Christ is Emmanuel, God with Us; Jesus is the one wounded for our transgressions; Jesus is the one

who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows

ii. Humble yourself before the Lord Jesus Christ; become His disciple; take up your cross and follow Him

III. Not All Who Listen Patiently to the Gospel Trust Themselves to Jesus Christ (28)

A. Agrippa says to Paul, literally “In a little you persuade me to become a Christian”

1. KJV “almost” means “with a little more persuading you would persuade me to become a Christian”

2. NIV, ESV, NASB a question: “Do you in a little time persuade me to become a Christian?”

3. He understands that what he has heard is persuasive. But he is not fully persuaded to become a Christian.

B. Of course not Agrippa only, but many others in the room that day and countless people since then have been in the same position

IV. We Pray to God for Them (29a)

A. We want all who hear the gospel to believe and be saved

B. We could just wish for it; but what would that do?

C. We express that we “would to God” or “wish to God” meaning we pray this to God

D. We understand that it is a work of God for someone to believe the gospel of Jesus Christ

E. There is the ground for hope it will happen; there also is the consolation when it does not happen

V. We Plead with Them to Become Christians As We Are (29b)

A. Paul pleaded with Agrippa and with the others there a double plea

1. not only in a little, but in much

2. not only Agrippa, but all who hear the gospel

B. I plead with you today, as an ambassador of Jesus Christ, together with all here who believe in the gospel

1. Do not be in a little persuaded to be a Christian

2. But be in much persuaded to be a Christian

a. as Paul is

b. as I am

c. as we all are who trust in Jesus Christ

“It is good that you have listened patiently to me, as I have said what the prophets and Moses said, that Christ would suffer and rise from the dead, which is speech true and reasonable. Now believe in Him, that you may become a Christian as I am.”

GREEK (RWP)

en oligōi me peitheis Christianon poiēsai

Εν ολιγῶ με πειθεις Χριστιανον γενεσθαι

YLT And Agrippa said unto Paul, `In a little thou dost persuade me to become a Christian!' (29) and Paul said, `I would have wished to God, both in a little, and in much, not only thee, but also all those hearing me to-day, to become such as I also am--except these bonds.'

GENEVA Then Agrippa said vnto Paul, Almost thou perswadest me to become a Christian. (29) Then Paul sayd, I would to God that not onely thou, but also all that heare me to day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

KJV Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. (29) 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.

NKJV Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian." (29) And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains."

NASB Agrippa replied to Paul, "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian." 29 And Paul said, "I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains."

ESV And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?" (29) And Paul said, "Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am--except for these chains."

NIV Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" (29) Paul replied, "Short time or long--I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."

RWP:

The Authorized rendering is impossible: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." En oligōi does not mean "almost." That would require oligou, par' oligon, or dei oligou.

It is not clear, however, precisely what *en oligoi* does mean. It may refer to time (in little time) or a short cut, but that does not suit well *en megalōi* in Act_26:29. Tyndale and Crammer rendered it “somewhat” (in small measure or degree). There are, alas, many “somewhat” Christians. Most likely the idea is “in (or with) small effort you are trying to persuade (*peitheis*, conative present active indicative) me in order to make me a Christian.” This takes the infinitive *poiēsai* to be purpose (Page renders it by “so as”) and thus avoids trying to make *poiēsai* like *genesthai* (become). The aorist is punctiliar action for single act, not “perfect.” The tone of Agrippa is ironical, but not unpleasant. He pushes it aside with a shrug of the shoulders.

<http://spurgeongems.org/vols13-15/chs871.pdf>

“I beg you patiently to listen to me, as I say what the prophets and Moses said, that Christ would suffer and rise from the dead, which is speech true and reasonable, that you may become a Christian as I am.”