

# ACTS: Almost Persuaded

## (Acts 26:24-29)

### Introduction

In the span of 35 to 40 years, we've gone from 120 men and women in Jerusalem speaking with the resurrected Jesus Christ to an empire that's beginning to be transformed by the gospel message. The gospel spread like wildfire!! Why? **The lives of the thousands of followers of Jesus were radically changed and they wanted others to experience the same.**

In addition to the amazing speed to which the gospel spread was the line it crossed. It crossed both socioeconomic AND ethnic lines. Most countries had their own gods.

In fact, so thoroughly was the gospel spreading through the ancient world in the first century the physician and historian Luke said all of Asia heard the word of the Lord. Now this doesn't mean everyone in ancient Rome *believed* the gospel, just that they knew what it was. Think about how incredible that is, that we have gone from 120 men and women in Jerusalem to not but a few decades later it being said of the Christian faith that all of Asia had heard.

#### Contextualize Acts 21:1-14.

- A) Beaten in Jerusalem (21:30-31)
- B) Detained by the Roman soldiers (21:32-36)
- C) Appeared before the Sanhedrin (22)
- D) Taken to Felix to settle the dispute (23)
- E) After two years of house arrest, Festus succeeds Felix (24:27)
- F) The religious establishment immediately brought the issue to Festus.
- G) After a few days, King Agrippa and Bernice paid a social call on Festus.
- H) Agrippa was asked to examine Paul's case.

**Note:** The dispute was a religious dispute and the Romans didn't know what to do.

**Contextualize this sermon in the ACTS series.**

## **I. Paul – Seizing Opportunities**

**Principle: Radically changed people want to tell others that they might experience CHANGE.**

**A) Become Aware of Spiritual Opportunities (26:1-3)**

**B) Trust God During Spiritual Opportunities (26:23-24)**

**C) Results of Seizing Opportunities**

1) Some were converted (28:23-24)

2) Some were interested

3) Some rejected (28:23-24)

## **II. Agrippa – Almost Persuaded**

**Principle: Almost persuaded is completely lost.**

**A) Confronted with the Gospel (26:19-23)**

**B) Conviction of the Holy Spirit (26:22)**

**C) Rejection of the Gospel (26:28)**

## **III. You and Me – Living On Mission**

**Principle: You were made for more than survival. You were made for a mission.**

**A) Be Sensitive To Opportunities**

**B) Excuses For Not Living On Mission**

1) I don't have my life together

2) People are closed to the gospel. We do live in the last days.

a) People are open to talk about spiritual realities.

- b) Many are grateful for the opportunity to talk about or ask questions.
  - c) Seldom are those that are critical or persecute me for my faith.
- 3) I am afraid they will reject me.
  - 4) I don't know how.

### **C) Make Much of Jesus**

## **Conclusion**

More than 2,000 years ago King Agrippa told the Apostle Paul “*Almost, you persuade me to be a Christian.*” (Acts 26:28). In 1871 Reverend Brundage expounded upon this sad story in Acts, and then ended his Sunday Morning sermon with the words "He who is almost persuaded is almost saved, and to be almost saved is to be entirely lost".

Philip Paul Bliss (1838-1876), composer of many hymns, including *The Light of the World is Jesus and Dare to Be a Daniel*, was among the congregants listening to Reverend Brundage's sermon. The pastor's powerful closing words left such an impression upon Bliss that he set about composing a song with the same sentiment.

*Almost Persuaded* was published that same year in *The Charm: A Collection of Sunday School Music*, and quickly found its way into the majority of English Christian hymnals; the compelling words have since been sung at many an altar call.

### **Almost Persuaded**

Almost persuaded now to believe;  
Almost persuaded Christ to receive;  
Seems now some soul to say,  
Go, Spirit, go Thy way,  
Some more convenient day  
On Thee I'll call.

Almost persuaded, come, come today;  
Almost persuaded, turn not away;  
Jesus invites you here,  
Angels are lingering near

Prayers rise from hearts so dear;  
O wanderer, come!

Almost persuaded, harvest is past!  
Almost persuaded, doom comes at last!  
Almost cannot avail;  
Almost is but to fail!  
Sad, sad, that bitter wail  
Almost, but lost!