

“Almost”

In the book of Acts we read how Apostle Paul after having preached this Gospel of Jesus Christ through out Asia desired to go to Jerusalem to visit the other Apostles and to testify of all the mighty works that God performed in His ministry to the Gentiles. Paul desired to show proof of his ministry, to establish that God had indeed included us the Gentiles in His Plan of Salvation.

In Jerusalem he went to the temple to worship and while there certain Jews which were from Asia saw Paul in the temple and stirred the people up against him, (these were those Jews who rejected the Gospel of Jesus Christ and hated Paul’s preaching) and they forcibly took him and cried out; men of Israel, help! This is the man, that teaches all men everywhere against the people and the law and this place and then they lied and said Paul was polluting their holy place; the temple.

And as they went about to kill him, (Church, they hated Paul and desired to slay him). Surely Satan had stirred up these Ani-Christian Jews to the point of madness, insanity in their hatred for Jesus Christ. Then the Roman captain of Jerusalem with his soldiers ran into the crowd and rescued Paul as they were beating him.

The Roman captain bound Paul with two chains—and took him into custody. The next day Paul was brought before the High Priest, Ananias, and spoke to the Jewish Council and said, Because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead I am called into question this day. And as Paul confessed Jesus to them once again, they desired to kill him and when the Roman captain saw they would literally pull Paul to pieces he sent his soldiers in and forcibly rescued Paul from among the Jews. Church! Do not be naive, the world does not love you, as a matter of fact the world hates you! Because Jesus said if the love of the world is in you then the love of God is not in you. For the world loves it’s own, but you are not of the world but of Christ, therefore the world hates you!

Hear Me!

There are also those in the world that say that they are Christians, that say that they love God and yet they still hate us, the Jesus Name people; the Apostolics. They persecute us, they slander us, they mock our Oneness belief that God is One. But Jesus said by this, will all men know that we are His disciples, that you love one another. For how can you say that you love God whom you have not seen, and yet hate your brother whom you have seen. Let all men be a liar but Christ Jesus Truth!

Then the Roman captain told the Jewish Council that he was taking Paul to Felix the Roman Governor at Herod’s Judgement Hall and if they wanted to accuse Paul they must appear before Felix. And after five days Ananias, the High Priest and the Elders went to Felix to once again accuse Paul and have him put to death. And Paul defended himself before Felix concerning his teachings of Jesus and of the Resurrection of the dead-and Felix would not turn Paul over to the Jews. Saints, we also may one day stand before judges, magistrates, governor’s, and even kings

to defend ourselves concerning our Apostolic Doctrine. But praise God do not fear, for Jesus himself said, take no thought what you shall say in that day, for in that day the Holy Ghost will speak through you.

But after two years of imprisonment Festus became Governor of Jerusalem in Felix's place--and Felix desiring to please the Jews left Paul, bound in prison. Then the High Priest informed Festus concerning Paul, and desired Festus to send Paul back to Jerusalem for trial all the time secretly they were laying in wait along the way to catch Paul and kill him. The High Priest Ananias was a liar!! He was a liar like his Father-Satan-who was a liar in the beginning. Satan is the father of all liars.

But Festus refused to release Paul. Then there came a King named Agrippa to visit Festus and Festus told him of Paul and how the Jews went about to slay him and Agrippa desired to speak with Paul.

If you have your Bibles turn to:

Acts 26: 1-29

- 1 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:
- 2 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:
- 3 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.
- 4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;
- 5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, (tell the truth) that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.
- 6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:
- 7 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.
- 8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?(You know our customs, our religion)
- 9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.
- 10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.

This is verified in the scriptures when the Jews stoned Stephen to death for his testimony of Jesus Christ. For as they were stoning him they had laid their coats at a young man's feet whose name was Saul. This same Saul became the Great Apostle Paul.

11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.(Paul compelled them upon threat of death to deny Jesus!)

12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. (Can I hear an amen!)

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: (To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.)

20 But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. (The Holy Ghost must have been moving in Paul to such a degree that Festus thought Paul had lost his mind.)

25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26 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. (In secret)

27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. (Paul was witnessing in the midst of his own testimony to save his life)

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. (Saints we are hearing Paul's words this day)

“Almost thou persuaded me to be a Christian”

Church! “Almost is not enough!!!” It takes more than believing, it takes obedience. I thank God for you that are here today, that you have chosen Jesus as your personal Savior; that you are saved by the blood of the Lamb. That have chosen Christianity---“**But woe** unto them that would say—to the church: Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian!

How terribly sad, how horribly tragic for a person to :

*Only almost accept Jesus as their Savior

*Only almost to come to repentance

*Only almost to have been baptized in Jesus' wonderful name

*Only almost to have received the Holy Ghost

*Only almost to have spoken in other tongues as the Spirit of God gives the utterance

*Only almost to have had their name written down in the Lamb's Book of Life

Only almost to have been saved!

But instead they have chosen:

The pleasure of sin

The lust of the eye

The lust of the flesh

They have chosen to indulge themselves in evil

To gratify the carnal man.

They have become a slave to their own body

They have become a servant of sin

Almost, almost. My God almost to have escaped a devil's hell! But now they are those that die leaving this world **unsaved**.

Church do not say - to God's Spirit

* Almost you persuaded me to live Holy.

* Almost you persuaded me to come out from among the world.

* Almost you persuaded me to give up the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, the pleasures of this life!

* Almost I chose the strait and narrow path that leads to life - But now I have chosen the wide and the easy way that leads to death!

* Almost I gave in to the sweet presence of the Holy Ghost.

* Almost I believed - But then, I heard another voice say, eat and you will be wise! You will not surely die!

Almost to have **received Eternal life!**

But now they have chosen the **wrong** way, the **wrong** door, the **wrong** gate. For they have chosen the **wide gate**, the **easy way** that leads to **death**.

Almost they chose the **Strait Gate, the Narrow Way, the Lord's Path that would have lead them to Life!!**

For the scriptures say, wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and many there be that enter in thereat. For strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it!

But now **Hell** has enlarged itself. Hell **has opened its mouth wide** to receive them into eternal living death. To suffer day and night forever and forever. Where there is weeping and wailing

and gnashing of teeth, where **the soul dieth not** and the fire is never quenched!! Be not deceived there is a real hell---as surely as there is a heaven there is a hell!

But now forever to eternally regret, they only, almost became a Christian. God's word says: Therefore will I number them to the sword and they shall bow down to the slaughter, because when I called they did not answer, when I spoke they did not hear, but did evil before mine eyes and did choose that wherein I delighted not, Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold my servants shall eat, but they shall be hungry. Behold my servants shall drink, but they shall be thirsty. Behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: **My** servants shall rejoice, but they shall be ashamed. **Behold** my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but they shall cry for sorrow of heart and shall howl for vexation of spirit. For the Lord shall slay them. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: **for the Lord GOD shall slay thee**, and call his servants by another name: (Isaiah 65:12-15)

It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God! For our god is a consuming fire!

Now if they could go back, they would choose differently. They would run to an **altar of repentance**. (Let's all stand)

They would plead with the Pastor to baptize them in the Holy name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins! They would **tarry long** at the altar, praying, crying unto God for the precious gift of the Holy Ghost. Now they would hunger and thirst after righteousness that they might be filled. Filled with God's Holy Spirit.

But there is no coming back from Hell. There is **no second chances in Hell!** Only we who are alive can change our minds from almost becoming a Christian to say, **I will obey God's word; God's plan of salvation; I will be saved by the Blood of Jesus. I will make Heaven my Home!** I will hear him say, well done my good and faithful servant! Enter into the rest of the Lord!

"I will be a Christian" It is our choice----Heaven or Hell

Jesus is calling! Let us answer Him!!!!

Let's all make our way to the altar and reach out to God and reaffirm our walk in the Lord!

When you hear Jesus' voice harden not your hearts as in the provocation **For today is the day of Salvation!!!**