

# **The Almost Christian**

by

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## Acts 26:27-29

Acts 26:27-29, *“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.”*

This answer of King Agrippa to Paul shows that there is such a thing as being almost and yet not altogether a Christian.

There are those who go just this far toward becoming a Christian.

Let us see what is implied in being almost a Christian, and also what is implied in being altogether a Christian.

## The Almost Christian.

Some people think that they are a Christian because they were born, reared, and educated in a Christian nation, or because they are accustomed to a Christian civilization.

But such people are Christians only by geographical classification and not by profession and devotion.

By such a classification, one would be a Mohammedan if he lived in Asia, or a Shintoist if he lived in Japan, or a Confucian if he lived in China.

In this sense, Carl Sagan (atheist) could have been called a Christian.

Some people are considered Christians only because they have decided in favor of Christianity in their own minds against all other religions.

They believe the Christian religion to be divine, and they have promised themselves time and time again when sick, or otherwise alarmed, that they will become Christians in fact, but they have procrastinated the all-important matter of a full surrender to Christ in gospel obedience.

Some people think that they are Christians because they have espoused the morals of Christianity.

They are consistently honest.

- They would not take away their neighbor's good by theft.
- They would not cheat and defraud, either the rich or the poor.

They are extremely truthful.

- They would not testify falsely.
- They would not slander or backbite against their neighbor.

These "almost" Christians do nothing which the gospel forbids.

- They do not take the name of the Lord in vain.
- They abstain from adultery, fornication, drunkenness, covetousness, and murder.

Like the rich young ruler in Matt. 19:20, they can say concerning God's moral commands, "*The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?*"

Of such people Jesus would say just as He told the scribe in Mark 12:34, "... *Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. ...*"

## **The altogether Christian.**

To be a Christian completely is to be a disciple of Christ.

Acts 11:26, "*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.*"

To be a disciple of any person is to be a follower of that person, and a learner of his teachings.

To be a disciple of Confucius is to embrace his teachings.

Thus, to be a disciple of Christ is to deny oneself, take up the cross, and follow Jesus.

Luke 9:23, "*And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*"

To be altogether a Christian means to be a member of Christ's church.

In becoming a disciple of Christ, one must be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Matt. 28:19, "*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*"

When one is baptized, he is added to the church.

- Acts 2:37-38, “*Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*”
- Acts 2:41, “*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*”
- Acts 2:47, “*Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*”

To be wholly a Christian implies that one has been born twice.

John 3:3, “*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*”

Not understanding the meaning of Christ’s words, Nicodemus asked Jesus:

John 3:4, “*... How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?*”

In answer to this question, Jesus said:

John 3:5, “*Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*”

But how is the new birth accomplished?

Some say that it is through a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the sinner’s heart, which brings conviction and conversion to him.

Then that he ought to be united with some church, and upon his baptism in water he is then born of the second element in the new birth, that of water.

But this would make two baptisms, and the Bible teaches that there is but one.

Eph. 4:5, “*One Lord, one faith, one baptism,*”

Also, this would make two additional births; Jesus did not say, “*Except a man be born again and again,*” but He did say, “*Except a man be born again,*”.

When the word of God is faithfully preached, the Holy Spirit is operating, for Jesus said:

John 6:63, “*It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*”

When the word of God is preached it leads men to have faith, for Paul declared:

Rom. 10:17, *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*

When faith is implanted within the heart, this leads men to want to be baptized, for Jesus said:

Mark 16:16, *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”*

When a penitent believer is baptized, he is baptized into Christ.

Gal. 3:27, *“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”*

Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:17, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”*

Hence, to become a new creature is to be born again.

To be altogether a Christian is to be married to Christ.

- Eph. 5:25-32, *“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”*
- 2 Cor. 11:2, *“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”*
- Eph. 5:24, *“Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.”*

Moses commanded the Israelites in Exo. 20:8, *“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.”* But the church is not to receive its orders from Moses, but from Christ.

David said to Israel in Psalms 33:2, *“Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.”*

But the church is not under the dominion of David, but of Christ.

Col. 3:16-17, *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do*

*in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”*

Besides, what David told Israel to do did not have the blessing of God.

Amos 6:1,5, *“Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came! ... That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David;”*

## **Why we should be a Christian and a Christian only.**

Because the name “Christian” is a God-given name.

There have been some men in the world who have stated that the name “Christian” was a name given in derision by the enemies of Christ to His followers.

Christian scholars have been battling against this persistent falsehood for years. It’s like a falsehood told of someone and spread around by word of mouth that just won’t die.

Its source cannot be found anywhere in scripture or history. There is absolutely no evidence to support this idea.

Furthermore, if the name “Christian” was given in derision of the faith by the enemies of the gospel, whatever became of that everlasting “*new name*” which the mouth of God named upon His children?

- Isa. 62:2, *“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.”*
- Isa. 65:15, *“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:”*

God promised that He, Himself, would give His people a new name. He promised that it would be given at a time when “*the Gentiles and kings*” had seen His righteousness.

It was not to be a name which enemies would give.

Isa. 56:5, *“Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.”*

It was not to be a name which would arise beyond the fellowship of God’s people. It was given in His house and within His walls.

Acts 11:26, “*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.*”

This had occurred one chapter in Acts after the conversion of Cornelius and his household, who were Gentiles, fulfilling the prophecy in Isaiah that the Gentiles shall see His righteousness, and that they would be called by a new name.

1 Pet. 4:16, “*Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.*”

Peter recognized this name for the followers of Christ.

Acts 26:28, “*Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*”

This name was recognized before kings, as God said it would happen back in the book of Isaiah.

Why be a Christian and Christian only? Because the name Christian is the name by which we glorify God.

In the long ago, under the Jewish Covenant, God had a name for His people to wear, and that name was Israel.

Why? Because the name “El” was the Hebrew name for “Jehovah”, thus every time the name of “Israel” was spoken, the name of God was honored.

There is in Christendom today a multiplicity of names, and in how many of them can we glorify God?

1 Pet. 4:16, “*Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.*”

## **Conclusion.**

Are you a Christian? Not almost, but altogether?

Remember, you can be almost saved and yet lost.

You may pay for years on a home and have it almost paid for, and then lose it.

You may almost get well, and then die.

There are many people “almost”, but not altogether persuaded to be Christians. The world is full of Agrippa’s.

If you are not a Christian, Christ has no part of your life.

Matt. 12:30, “*He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.*”

If you are not altogether a Christian, then believe of the Lord Jesus with all your heart.

And repent of your sins.

And upon your public confession of the name Jesus,

Be baptized into Christ and thereby become completely a Christian.

Live loyally to that name throughout life, and then receive a Christian's reward in the sweet by and by.





