

Oak Grove Church of Christ

(502) 749-9209

Sunday

Bible Class: 9:30 AM
Morning Worship: 10:30 AM
Evening Worship: 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Class: 7:30 PM

Evangelist: Bruce J. Dehut

*Home Bible Studies Available
Upon Request*

Oak Grove church of Christ
9203 Thixton Lane
Louisville, KY 40291



OAK GROVE ENCOURAGER

**"And let us consider one another in order to
stir up love and good works" Hebrews 10:24**

JUNE 11, 2006

Almost Persuaded

One of the saddest proclamations noted in the New Testament was that of king Agrippa in *Acts 26:28*. Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

The Biblical record gives no statement beyond this, of Agrippa's inclination towards Christianity. As far as we know, the king passed from this life failing to commit himself to the saving power of Jesus Christ. But this failure was not due to a lack of knowledge or opportunity on Agrippa's part.

An Expert in Jewish Protocol

Agrippa II was the great grandson of Herod the Great. The Herodian house descended from Esau and were of Edomite stock. The land in which they dwelled was conquered and added

to the Jewish state about 130 B.C., and they submitted to the rite of circumcision and embraced Jewish religion. Most of the Herods were educated in Rome and were considered ceremonial; half Jews at best (Unger's Bible Dictionary). The apostle Paul was well aware of this fact, and counted himself fortunate to finally give an account of the charges against him to Agrippa; "*especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews*" (*Acts 26:3*). Paul had spent over two years in confinement, pleading his case before Felix, who had a "*more accurate knowledge of the Way*" (*Acts 24:22*) and Festus, who couldn't even put into words the charges against Paul (*Acts 25:26-27*), because the accusations were based upon what Festus called, the Jews superstition and the resurrection of Jesus (*Acts 25:19*). Paul knew that not only was Agrippa an authority in Jewish customs but he most assuredly was aware of the commotion caused by Jesus of Nazareth and His followers (*Acts 26:26-27*).

He Heard The Gospel Preached

Paul declared to Agrippa that he himself was a devout Jew, looking anxiously for the fulfillment of promises made to the fathers (*Acts 26:6-7*). He goes on to say that he was a militant Pharisee, persecuting Christians even to foreign cities (*Acts 26:11*). But he relates to Agrippa his encounter with the risen Lord on the road to Damascus. How, by the grace of God, he became a minister and witness to both the Jews and the Gentiles concerning the forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ (*Acts 26:16-18*). Paul left no doubt that his mission included instructing people to "*repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance*" (*Acts 26:19*). Paul nailed Agrippa right between the eyes when he asked the question he already had the answer for; "*King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe*" (*Acts*

26:27)

An Ego Problem

Maybe one of the reasons that king Agrippa wavered was due to his lack of acceptance by the people. Josephus mentions that Agrippa's father, Herod the king, was "keenly fond of popularity and possessed much personal magnetism." His status among the Jews was definitely heightened when he harassed the church and murdered James (*Acts 12:1-3*). However, his son Agrippa II was never popular with his subjects and may have lost even more esteem in the eyes of the Jews if he had converted to Christianity. History tells us that eventually he joined forces with the Romans to abuse the Jews and destroy Jerusalem in A.D. 70. So either way, he came out on the bottom of the popularity poll among the Jews.

Fear of Losing Power

King Agrippa could have been hesitant because the Romans were the ones that had carried out the crucifixion of Jesus. Why would they hesitate to remove Agrippa from his throne, strip him of his riches and possibly execute him? But Jesus assures us that nothing is worth holding onto if it costs us our souls (*Mark 8:36*). God orchestrates the rise and fall of kingdoms (*Romans 13:1*), Agrippa's would be no different.

Without Excuse

We could speculate all our lives about why Agrippa chose not to become a Christian that day. But just like the Gentiles that Paul addressed in his letter to the Romans, king Agrippa was without excuse. *Romans 1:20* For since

the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

Lesson To Be Learned

God has an answer for all our procrastinations:

1. We all have heard: (*Colossians 1:23*).
2. We are to put aside our egos: (*Luke 9:23*)
3. Hold nothing of this world dearer than our souls: (*Mark 8:36*)
4. We are all without excuse, all have sinned: (*1 John 1:10*)
5. Why Wait: (*Acts 22:16*)

King Agrippa's words were obviously the inspiration to Phillip P. Bass' hymn "Almost Persuaded." How true the words ring in the latter portion of the last verse:

*"Almost" cannot avail;
"Almost" is but to fail;
Sad, sad, that bitter wail
"Almost – but lost!"*

If you are vacillating about becoming a Christian, DON'T!

Bruce J. Dehut

The Paradox Of Greatness

by Carl McMurray

In a recent survey of 287 college students I was reading about, nearly all of them expressed a desire for greatness. At the

same time, very few perceived any connection between greatness and service. This is a fascinating index on our times if you consider that great men and women of the past are generally considered in that light *because of* their service.

George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington Carver, Albert Einstein, Marie Curie, Louis Pasteur and more were not considered in the light of "greatness" in their day. It was as the sun set on their achievements and their service to others became obvious that their true greatness began to shine. The most unique individual to walk this earth, Jesus, the Son of God, exemplified greatness by getting down on His knees and washing the feet of some who didn't even understand what He was doing.

He said in John 13:13-15, *"You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you."*

Let us follow in the steps of our Lord by learning the greatness of service. The paradox of this path is that those who seek after greatness by watching out for self first or defending their wants and desires at all costs are usually remembered as selfish, boastful, or grasping. The one who considers the needs of others as more important (Phil. 2:4) and humbly takes self off the pedestal of exaltation are the ones who are exalted.

Jesus taught in Matthew 20:26-28, *"It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to*

serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Do you desire to be "great" in the kingdom of God? Look around for someone to serve! Old or young, married or single, ill or healthy – in some way this week try to assist and help someone else. It is you who will reap the blessing.

Find The Books Of The Bible

I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible. It was a lulu, kept people looking so hard for facts and for others it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the names of the books were not capitalized, but the truth finally struck home to numbers of readers. To others it was real job. We want it to be a most fascinating few moments for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help them. I will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one of them and there will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea, so she can concentrate better. See how well you can compete. Relax now, for there really are sixteen names of books in the bible in this story.

Hint: Book names can span punctuation and are always spelled left to right.

Answer next week.

THE LORD'S DAY PRIVILEGE LIST

Sunday Morning Service

Announcements: **Mike Shepherd**

Song Leader: **Wayne Runner**

Opening Prayer: **Larry Runner**

Lord's Table: **Kenny Case
Chuck Sharp
Andy Milliner
Jr. Alford**

Scripture Reading: **Brian Shepherd**

Sermon: **Bruce Dehut**

Closing Prayer: **Steve Smith**

Sunday Evening Service

Announcements: **Mike Shepherd**

Song Leader: **Wayne Runner**

Opening Prayer: **Jim Phelps**

Sermon: **Bruce Dehut**

Lord's Table: **Kenny Case**

Closing Prayer: **Bill Milliner**