

SOME TRUTHS ABOUT BEING CONVERTED

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The word “conversion” is a Bible word, and conversion is a Bible subject which should be of interest to “all who have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”
2. The word, in its six various forms (convert, converted, converts, converteth, converting, conversion), appears some 15 times in the KJV.
3. All sinners are called upon to “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...,” Ac.3:19a.

II. DISCUSSION

A. WE BEGIN OUR DISCUSSION OF CONVERSION WITH THE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS, OR WHAT IT IS BY DEFINITION.

1. Cruden’s Complete Concordance.
 - a. “Conversion”: “Literally, *a turning*, the word is used to mean, theologically, the spiritual or moral change which accompanies the turning of a sinner from his sins to God, Psa.51:13.”
 - b. “Convert,” or “converted”: “The Revised Versions usually use the literal form, *turn again*.”
2. W.E. Vine, I, 238,239:
 - a. Verb form
 - (1) “*to turn*,” is translated “be converted” in Mt.18:3
 - (2) “*to turn about, turn towards*,” used transitively, i.e., directed upon an object, as in Jas.5:19,20,... “(of causing a person to turn)” – i.e., “the sinner from the error of his way.”
 - b. Noun form
 - (1) “akin to A, No.2, *a turning about, or around*,” (as in Ac.15:3, speaking of “the conversion of the Gentiles” under the preaching of Paul.
 - (2) “The word implies a turning from and a turning to; corresponding to these are repentance and faith;

Cf. “turning to God from idols” (1Th.1:9). Divine grace is the efficient cause, human agency the responding effect.”

B. CONVERSION IN ITS COMPLETENESS IS A THREEFOLD PROCESS BY WHICH MAN TURNS FROM SIN TO GOD.

1. First, there is a change of heart, a turning of the heart or the will of the sinner, ***by faith***.
 - a. Evil or sinful hearts must be converted or changed, Mt.15:18-20; 13:15.
 - b. It is the law of the Lord that effects this change, Psa.19:7.
 - c. There is but one agent of change for the hearts of men; it is faith, Ac.15:9. Cf. Rom.10:17; Ac.26:15-18; Rom. 10:6-17.
 - d. The Samaritans underwent a change of heart by faith “when they believed Philip...,” Ac.8:9-12.
2. Second, there is a change of life, a turning from sin, a reformation of life, **by repentance**.
 - a. For repentance is a change of will, produced by godly sorrow, resulting in a reformation of life, Mt.21:28-31; 2Cor.7:8-11; Ac.3:19; Jas.5:19,20.
 - b. Heart-pricked Jews on Pentecost in Ac.2:37 when asking, “what shall we do?” were commanded, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...,” Ac.2:38.
 - c. Ac.17:30 declares that God “commanded all men everywhere to repent.”
 - d. Though repentance is not specifically mentioned in the case of the conversion of the Philippian jailor, his repentance is evident by his very actions once he heard and believed. Cf. Ac.16:33 with Vv.22-24.
3. Third, there is a change of relationship **by baptism** in the name of Jesus Christ preceded by faith and repentance.
 - a. It is never enough simply to change one’s heart and life. And with genuine faith and true repentance the sinner never stops there!
 - b. One’s relationship, one’s spiritual relationship, must also be changed, which is accomplished in baptism in the name of Jesus Christ “for the remission of sins,” or to

“wash away sins,” as one is “baptized into Christ,” where salvation and all spiritual blessings are found. See: --

- (1) Mt.28:18,19; Ac.19:5: relationship changed. Cf. Eph.2:11-16.
 - (a) These similar expression signify that “those who are baptized become the possession of (belong to) and come under the dedicated protection of the one whose name they bear.” –F.W. Danker, et.al 2000. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 713.
 - (b) Cf. 1Cor.6:19,20.
 - (2) Rom.6:3-5; Gal.3:26,27 (emp. also V.29).
 - (3) 1Cor.12:12,13, “which is the church,” Eph.1:22,23; Col.1:18,24.
- c. The conversion process embracing baptism is a “working of God” according to Col.2:11,12 – not a meritorious work of man’s righteousness.
4. The conversion of the unbelieving Jews on Pentecost furnishes us a Bible example of, and further proof of, the complete three-fold process of conversion by which sinners turn to God as they respond in faith to Peter’s sermon.
- a. First, Peter’s sermon, Vv.14-36.
 - (1) Peter begins in Vv.14-21 by denying that the apostles are drunk as some had charged, but that the miraculous events they were witnessing were the beginning fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy of Joel 2:28-32, involving two important things:
 - (a) The pouring out of the Holy Spirit, i.e., spiritual gifts, upon all flesh: your sons, daughters, young men, old men, servants, and handmaidens.
 - (b) Whosoever shall call on the name of name of the Lord shall be saved.
 - (2) Then the heart of his sermon is Vv.22-36, wherein he affirmed and proved his proposition that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God, the one upon whom they must call, whom he said, “ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain,” but whom God has raised from the

dead, who has been raised to sit on David's throne, exalted to God's right hand in heaven, whom God has "made both Lord and Christ."

- b. Their response to Peter's sermon is in Vv.37-41 and reveals the following facts about their conversion.
 - (1) Upon hearing and believing the incontrovertible evidence supporting Peter's proposition that Jesus of Nazareth whom they had formerly denied is really the Christ, "they were pricked in their hearts", they asked "Peter and the other apostles, men and brethren what shall we do?" V.37.
 - (2) Peter responded in V.38 by commanding these who are now believers to, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin..."
 - (3) V.41 declares that 3,000 of those of the number who had witnessed the miraculous events, had heard the preaching of the gospel of Christ, and "gladly received his word were baptized," and, of course, that for the reason Peter had assigned to the act in V.38. Cf. V.47.
 - (4) This case of conversion proves once again that conversion is a threefold process by which man turns from sin to God.
 - (a) Obviously, their heart or will was changed by faith, Vv.36,37.
 - (b) Their life was changed by their repentance, V.38.
 - (c) Their relationship was changed by their baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, Vv.38,41,47.
- c. Their further response to the apostle's doctrine after their conversion is recorded in Vv.42-47.
 - (1) They steadfastly followed apostolic authority, V.42a.
 - (2) They worked and worshipped under apostolic direction, V.42b.
 - (a) The things specified in V.42b are acts of worship.

- (3) They were benevolent to their brethren in need who were scriptural objects of charity, Vv.44,45.
- (4) They continued in daily service to God, Vv.46,47.

III. CONCLUSION

- 1. A final truth about being converted concerns and emphasizes a number of specific benefits of conversion, which include:
 - a. Remission of sins, and/or salvation from past sins, Ac.2:38; Mk.16:16.
 - b. According to Ac.3:19:
 - (1) Past sins are “blotted out”
 - (2) “times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”
 - c. According to Jas.5:19,20:
 - (1) It saves a soul from death.
 - (2) Hides a multitude of sins.
 - d. According to Mt.15:13; Ac.28:27 it brings healing from the Lord.
 - e. According to Mt.18:3,4 it provides an heavenly entrance.
- 2. Therefore, when sinful men are converted, sinful men are not destroyed. Rather:
 - a. Sin in sinful men is destroyed.
 - b. Sinful men are saved from the guilt and practice of sin.
 - c. God is glorified; Jesus has another disciple; another soul takes up his citizenship in the kingdom of heaven.