

What Is Conversion?

What does the word conversion mean? "1 The act of converting, or the state of being converted, in any sense. The act of turning or of being turned to religious beliefs." (Funk & Wagnalls Dictionary 1949) Now, we know man's definition, but is there a Biblical definition? The Greek word "EPISTREPHO" means to turn about, turn towards (epi, and No. I), is used transitively, and so rendered "convert" (of causing a person to turn) in James 5:19-20 (W.E. Vines Expository Dictionary)--"My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." Conversion is found in Acts 15:3--"They therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren." We can plainly see that "conversion" or "converting" individuals is causing them to turn from their current practice and turn to another. God's Word tells individuals to return to God's Truth.

Those who profess to love and respect God agree that it is necessary to be "converted" to Christ in order to be saved from "SIN". In the last few bulletins we determined from the Scriptures what "SIN" is, That all have "SINNED", and that "SIN" has consequences. Unfortunately this agreement does not extend to the "How", "When" and the "Where" Conversion takes place. As with any question that deals with Spiritual matters the "ONLY SAFE" authority is God's revealed Word! We know that honest individuals that are truly seeking to please God will come to an understanding of this very important subject.

Now, let us look at the importance of "conversion" as revealed by the Holy Spirit. In Acts 3:19-21--"Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; 20 and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, [even] Jesus: 21 whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old." Now let us look at Matthew 13:15--"For this people's heart is waxed gross, And their ears are dull of hearing, And their eyes they have closed; Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And should turn again, And I should

heal them." and James 5:19-20--"My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins". There are three very important facts that have just been revealed to us: 1. Sins cannot be blotted out without conversion; 2. One cannot be healed from the effects of sin without being converted; 3. One cannot have salvation now and in eternity without being converted to the truth. Is conversion important? No! It is "ESSENTIAL"!

Man has devised many and various methods of conversions, But God has only revealed one! Permit me one question here. Is man or God going to save you? If it is man then we don't need anything that deals with God. If it's God then we need everything that pertains to God and the only place that God has revealed His will towards man is in His Holy Word. Therefore, it is imperative that we search His Inspired Word for the answers to conversion.

The problem today is that some individuals do not study God's word and are unaware of mans manipulation of God's word to promote their theories. Some have convinced their peers that conversion is by a miracle, others have the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, others promote the idea that there is nothing for a sinner to do and exclude obedience to the gospel of Christ...The book of Acts is GOD's examples to all of mankind for conversion. The book of Acts clearly reveals that conversion is not a miracle, BUT is brought about by God's spiritual law. The Holy Spirit operates in conversion, BUT He does His work through the word of God, The sinner must do the will of God to enter the kingdom, which is the church. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." Can you see the prerequisite that Jesus states here.."but he that doeth the will of "...WHO man or God? OF GOD! Last week's bulletin we discussed "The House Hold Of God" that is the Kingdom of Christ, the church etc. and learn that first century Christians were translated into this kingdom (Col.1:13 "who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love;".

The Scriptures state that conversion puts one in the kingdom, Matthew 18:1-3--"In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? 2 And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, 3 and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven"; that the

new birth puts one in the kingdom--John 3:1-8 "... 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ...5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God! 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. 8 The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."; We learned in Matt.7:21 that man must do the will of God. Therefore, since conversion puts one into the kingdom, doing the will of God puts one in the kingdom, and being born again puts one into the kingdom, we must conclude that these three expressions refer to and describe the same process of becoming a Christian, or the process of conversion.