

Unless You Are Converted

On one occasion, the disciples of Jesus came to Him and asked Him a question: "Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Jesus answered their question by placing a little child before them. He said: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:1-4).

The kingdom of heaven is the church of Christ (Matthew 16:18,19).

Only those who are humble like little children will be converted and enter the kingdom (church).

What is conversion? How is a sinner converted to Christ? Is there an example of conversion in the New Testament? What does the Bible say?

We shall answer these questions in this article.

Conversion is defined as a "change of location from one place to another; or a change of form from one substance to another."

Oil is changed (converted) to petrol when it is refined. Wood is changed (converted) to paper by chemical means. Cotton is changed (converted) to cloth.

A sinner is changed (converted) when he turns to God from idols (1 Thess. 1:9); when he turns from serving Satan to serving the Savior (Matthew 6:24); when he turns from serving sin to serving righteousness (Romans 6:16-

18); when he turns from living in the guilt of sin to having his sins forgiven (Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11); when he leaves Satan's kingdom and enters the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:13,14); and when he is changed from a lost state to a saved one (Luke 15:32; Ephesians 2:1-10). A sinner must do something in order to be saved (Acts 2:40).

The gospel of Christ is the power which causes him to be converted (Romans 1:16).

But in order for a sinner to be converted, he must make three changes: (1) He must have a change of heart; (2) He must have a change of life; (3) He must have a change of state or condition.

In the Bible, the heart refers to the mind of man. Jesus asked the scribes: "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" (Matthew 9:4)

In conversion, the sinner's heart is changed when he believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (John 8:24). This faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

The sinner's life is changed when he repents of his sins.

Repentance is not just being sorry that one has sinned. The Jews who crucified Jesus were "cut to the heart" when they heard Peter preach. When they asked, "What shall we do?" they were told to "Repent and be baptized every one of you...." (Acts 2:37-38).

They were very sorry for what they had done. But they still were told to repent. This shows that being sorry for sins, even being "cut to the heart" is not repentance.

Paul told the church at Corinth that "godly sorrow worketh repentance" (2 Cor. 7:10).

When one is truly sorry for his sins, it will cause him to repent. Repentance is a change of mind which leads to a change of life.

Jesus once told a story which explains very clearly what repentance is. He said: "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went." (Matthew 21:28,29).

The son disobeyed his father. When he repented of his disobedience, he changed his mind and did what his father had told him to do.

When a sinner is sorry for disobeying God, decides to do His will, and then obeys God, he has repented.

A sinner's state or condition is changed by baptism. Even though the sinner believes in Jesus Christ and has repented of his sins, he is still not forgiven. He must be changed from a state of guilt to a state of forgiveness.

This is done when he is baptized into Christ. Paul wrote:

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4).

In baptism one's sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus.

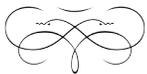
When he comes forth from the water, he then must live a new life of

righteousness. In baptism, one is put into Christ where all spiritual blessings are (Ephesians 1:3; Galatians 3:27). In baptism one is taken from Satan's kingdom and placed in God's kingdom, which is the body of Christ, the church (Colossians 1:13,18; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

The Jews on Pentecost Day are a good example of conversion. They were sinners for they were guilty of crucifying the Son of God (Acts 2:23). When they heard Peter preach the gospel, they believed.

Therefore, their hearts were changed by faith. They repented of their sins, so their lives were changed. They were baptized so their condition or state was changed. They were converted from sin to the Saviour. They were changed from being servants of Satan to being servants of God (Acts 2:22-47).

This is Bible conversion.
Sinner friend, what about you? Have you been converted? Unless you are converted, you will be lost.
Believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
Repent of all your past sins. (John 3:16; Acts 2:38)
Be buried with Christ in baptism so that your sins will be washed away. (Acts 2:38) You will then be translated into the kingdom of Christ where you will have forgiveness and redemption. (Col. 1:13; Eph. 5:25)



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