

Beginning the Christian Life - 4 - Conversion

Scripture reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Since "Conversion" is so closely related to "Repentance", attention should be given to what the Scriptures teach about it.

1. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE WORD?

The Greek word translated "convert" is "epistrophe." It is also translated "turn", and when used in connection with repentance and faith, means "to turn from the wrong way to the right way."

2. HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?

a) NECESSARY TO ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM

Matthew 18:3 - - "Verily I say unto you except ye be CONVERTED, and become as little children, YE SHALL NOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

b) SAVES FROM DEATH

James 5:20 - - "He which CONVERTETH the sinner from the error of his way, shall hide a multitude of sins."

c) BURDEN OF APOSTOLIC PREACHING

Acts 26:18-20 - - "To open their eyes, and TURN them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God ... showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and TURN to God..."

c) NECESSARY FOR BLOTTING OUT OF SIN

Acts 3:19 - - " Repent ye therefore, and be CONVERTED, that YOUR SINS MAY BE BLOTTED OUT..."

3. WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE?

a) ACKNOWLEDGING THE DIVINE LORDSHIP

Luke 1:16 - - "And many of the children of Israel shall He TURN to the Lord Their God."

Acts 11:21 - - "And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and TURNED UNTO GOD."

Acts 9:35 - - "And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and TURNED TO THE LORD."

Acts 15:19 - - "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the gentiles are TURNED UNTO GOD."

b) TURNING "FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT"

Acts 26:18 - - "To TURN them FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT ..."

c) TURNING "FROM THE POWER OF SATAN UNTO GOD"

Acts 26:18 - - "To TURN them....FROM THE POWER OF SATAN UNTO GOD."

d) TURNING FROM THE "VANITIES" OF "IDOLATRY"

Acts 14:15 - - "Ye should TURN from these VANITIES unto the living God."

1 Thessalonians 1:9 - - "Ye TURNED to God FROM IDOLS to serve the living and true GOD."

4. CAN CHRISTIANS BE CONVERTED?

a) THE APOSTLE PETER

Luke 22:32 - - "When thou art CONVERTED, strengthen they brethren."

5. REPENTANCE AND CONVERSION ILLUSTRATED (Luke 15:11-24)

1. THE CHANGE OF MIND (vs. 17)

a) "When he came to himself"

b) "I perish"

2. THE DECISION OF THE WILL (vs. 18, 19)

a) "I will arise and go to my father"

b) "I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee"

3. THE PERFORMANCE OF THE WILL (conversion) (vs.20)

a) "And he arose" (He left the old life.)

b) "Came to his father" (He started the new life.)