

HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVERTS

Converted By The Holy Spirit: Then And Now

We suppose everyone believes that the alien sinner must be converted—turned or changed—and that this change is brought about by the Holy Spirit. Though there is some disagreement on how the Holy Spirit operates to convert the sinner’s heart—directly or indirectly—the fact that He does operate upon the sinner in some way is agreed upon by all.

Let us then seek to understand from the Scriptures how the Holy Spirit operates, both then—in the first century—and now.

The Holy Spirit Reveals God’s Mind

Since only the Holy Spirit knows the mind of God and is the one charged with revealing it to the world, (1 Cor. 2:9-11), it must be so that the plan of salvation was revealed by Him. Jesus promised the apostles, **“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come”** (John 16:13).

The Great Commission must be studied, understood, and accepted for us to fully know what these apostles taught and how the Holy Spirit’s part in salvation is carried out. It would be good if our readers would take a moment to turn to all four accounts of the Great Commission given by Christ (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Lk. 24:46-47; John 20:20-23).

Key To Acts Of The Apostles

The Great Commission which guided the apostles is the key to understanding the book of Acts. Jesus was true to his promise to send the Holy Spirit’s power to the apostles. The Holy Spirit did descend upon the apostles to **“guide them into all truth”** on the notable day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

It was on that same day that the apostles of Christ—guided by the Holy Spirit—preached the plan of salvation in its fullness for the first time. What they spoke on that day was to last for all time to come. They spoke the plan of salvation by which God promises to save alien sinners—even the Lord’s murderers (Acts 2:38-41; 3:17). If any change from this plan

is made by man or man’s creed, there is no assurance that God’s promise to save will be carried out (Mark 16:15-16).

But How Did The Holy Spirit Do His Work?

Knowing the same plan by which they were converted will last for all time, when we notice how people were converted in the first century it will then be clear how souls are converted to the Lord now. Please remember that not only was this to be the same plan for all time, but it would be carried out or operate in the same manner for all time—by preaching (1 Cor. 1:21).

Though the circumstances surrounding the conversions in the New Testament may differ, the gospel plan is the same to all, both then and now.

Since the Word of God has been confirmed by miracles, there is no reason to confirm it again (John 20:30-31; Heb. 2:1-4). It was not by miracles that men were saved then, nor is it by miracles today. Salvation then and now was and is by the Lord’s gospel plan. When the apostle Peter **“stood up with the eleven”** (Acts 2:14) he preached or **“lifted up his voice”** to say that **“whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”** (Acts 2:21).

Gospel Heard, Not Felt

Following Peter’s sermon which included preaching the death, burial, and resurrection Jesus as Saviour of the world, Peter then called on all who **“heard”** to obey (Acts 2:37). Please notice in this verse that it is not said, “when they felt these things” they were pricked in their hearts. But it says, **“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart”** and asked **“Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”** This, then, is how the Holy Spirit operated in changing the sinners on Pentecost to children of God. It was by preaching that faith was produced (Gal. 3:26-27). In Acts 2:38-39, Peter gives the Holy Spirit’s answer: **“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”**

Not only was this the way people on Pentecost “called on the name of the Lord”—were converted—but it’s also how everyone who was converted in the New Testament after the day of Pentecost came to Christ.

Call On The Name Of The Lord

Saul of Tarsus was on his way to persecute Christians when the Lord arrested him on the Damascus road. Though the Lord spoke to Saul, he did not appear to him to convert him (Acts 26:13-18). The Great Commission had placed the gospel in the hands of men and Saul was told to go into the city and there, **“it shall be told thee what thou must do”** (Acts 9:6). A preacher named Ananias was the one who would “tell” Saul what he “must do.”

In harmony with the Lord’s commission, Ananias said to believing, penitent Saul, **“And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”** (Acts 22:16). Here—as well as in Romans 10:13-17—how souls call upon the name of the Lord, according to the Holy Spirit. Calling upon the name of the Lord is the same as obeying the gospel plan of salvation—delivered by the Holy Spirit (1 Pet. 4:16-18)—in faith, repentance, confession, and baptism.

All of us must obey the same gospel in order to be members of the same institution, the body or church over which Jesus reigns as head (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).

The Gospel: God’s Power To Salvation

Thus, we must conclude that the gospel—revealed by the Holy Spirit through the apostles—was and is the power of God for salvation. That was true for men of the first century and is true for all today. Salvation never came to anyone in the first century by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, but by obeying the Spirit’s word that was preached by men.

The power of God for salvation to all people, then and now, is the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). When the gospel reigns in the hearts of men it means they are Christians, converted by the Holy Spirit.

Gary Colley from *The Gospel Preceptor*

ILL

Rachel's Aunt Sally continues to battle cancer. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers.

PRAYER LIST

Jacob Flowers is suffering with seizures. Leta Thrasher is in the nursing home in Aurora, Missouri.

MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING

We will have the men's business meeting following AM services this Sunday (November 12) in the lower level. All men please plan to attend.

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM 37; Sunday PM 19; Wednesday 20.

Think On These Things

[4] Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

[5] Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

[6] Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

[7] And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

[8] Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

[9] Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Philippians 4:4-9

Those To Serve

November 12, 2017

BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... George Thomas

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... George Thomas

SONG LEADER..... Trent Thrasher

OPENING PRAYER George Thomas

PRESIDE..... Dave Parish

ASSIST..... John Dodson

CLOSING PRAYER..... Trent Thrasher

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER John Carter

CLOSING PRAYER..... George Thomas

LORD'S SUPPER..... Trent Thrasher

WEDNESDAY 15th

SONG LEADER..... Trent Thrasher

INVITATION George Thomas

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Morning Worship 10:30 AM

Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher

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