

Becoming Members of the Household of God

Ephesians 2:19-22

¹⁹ You are no longer strangers and foreigners,
but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being
the chief cornerstone,
²¹ in whom the whole building, being joined together,
grows into a holy temple in the Lord,
²² in whom you also are being
built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Our Attitude

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Lesson 1: The Beatitudes, Not Bad Attitudes

A beatitude is a pronouncement of blessing or happiness. The beatitudes of Jesus in **Matthew 5:3-12** say, "Blessed are" They could be translated, "Happy are those who"

There are two guiding principals at work in Jesus' beatitudes. Elements of

1) The unexpected - can't be understood from a human standpoint; must be approached from an inner, spiritual perspective, and sometimes with an eye to eternity

2) The extreme – His choice of wording for "poor" means "poverty-stricken", and "hunger and thirst" mean "starving to death and dying of thirst"; He says to "be *exceedingly* glad."

Parables and passages that illustrate the beatitudes:

Poor in spirit versus **mourning sin**: Pharisee and tax collector Luke 18:9-14

Meek: 2 sons in Matthew 21:28-32

Hunger and thirst for righteousness: Field and pearl of great price in Matthew 13:44-46

Merciful: Unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:21-35

Pure in heart: Opposite of the hypocritical Pharisees in Matthew 23

1) In **Matthew 5:3-12**, Jesus pronounces blessings on certain people. Match each type of person with a word or phrase that means the same.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. poor in spirit | ___ sincere; genuine |
| b. mourn | ___ spreading love, esp. between God and man |
| c. meek | ___ gentle; submissive |
| d. hunger and thirst for righteousness | ___ hated by the ungodly |
| e. merciful | ___ sorry for sin |
| f. pure in heart | ___ seeking God's things |
| g. peacemakers | ___ humble |
| h. persecuted for righteousness' sake | ___ compassionate |

2) Now match each attitude (or action) with its *opposite*.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. poverty of spirit | ___ One of the good old boys. |
| b. sorrow for sin | ___ A bad influence; always causing trouble. |
| c. meekness | ___ Never darkens the door of a church building. |
| d. hunger and thirst for righteousness | ___ Puts up a good front. |
| e. mercy | ___ Self-righteous; "God owes me salvation." |
| f. purity of heart | ___ "We'll do it <i>my</i> way." |
| g. peacemaking | ___ "I don't care who might get hurt." |
| h. being persecuted for righteousness' sake | ___ "Nobody's perfect." |

Lesson 2: What Shapes Our Attitudes?

Jesus said, “Judge not. . .” (**Matthew 7:1**), but he also said, “Judge righteous judgment.” (**John 7:24**) So when Jesus says, “Judge not. . .”, we must look closely at the context. In the next few verses (**Matthew 7:6**), Jesus tells us how to treat “dogs” and “swine”, and it takes judgment to decide who they are. He also said we will know false prophets (i.e., be able to judge who they are) “by their fruits.” So we may judge another person’s *actions*, but we do *not* judge their *thoughts or motives* (because we can’t know them unless the person tells us), and we never act as a judge of their soul.

The beatitudes (**Matthew 5:3-12**) are pronouncements of blessings on people with certain attitudes. These attitudes don’t simply appear by accident; they usually develop over time from a person’s beliefs, circumstances in life and personality, and the process can be very complex. When we begin to appreciate just *how* complex it can be, we perhaps begin to understand why Jesus warned us not to judge another person’s motives. Even actions (which we *must* judge) are *usually* a direct product of a person’s attitudes. But beware! Even a person’s actions may result from a disease or condition beyond his control such as Alzheimer’s, brain injury, nervous breakdown, etc..

Notice a few examples of how our personality, circumstances and beliefs can work together to shape our attitudes, and how our attitudes in turn can drive our actions:

Personality →

Attitudes:

Timid (“I hate confrontation”) → won’t speak for the truth when in the minority

Restless → wants change for the sake of change → discontented with the services

Lazy → helpless (“Somebody else will do it”)

Self-conscious/shy → avoids contact with brethren

Ambitious → the church becomes an arena for power struggles and “politics”

Competitive/Intense → every situation (including Bible study) becomes a contest

Perfectionist → judgmental; overly critical of others

Circumstances →

Attitudes and beliefs:

Poverty → materialism; self-conscious; Or, → “It’s okay to steal” (**Proverbs 30:8-9**)

Wealth → materialism; pride; Or, → ungodliness (**Proverbs 30:8-9**)

A life on welfare → selfishness (“The church (or, society) owes me. . .”)

Too much education → intellectualism or humanism (**1 Corinthians 1:26-28**)

Lack of education → helpless; “The Scriptures are hard to understand”

Ignorance of the Scriptures → helpless; “It’s someone else’s job to teach”; “Ask someone else”
→ angry responses or personal attacks to defend my beliefs

Splits in the family (or church) over religion → bitterness; Or, → won’t “make a fuss” over the truth

An almost seared conscience → anger when discussing spiritual matters (e.g., Felix, **Acts 24:25**)

High public position → won’t admit mistakes (e.g., Festus, **Acts 26:28**)

Suffered mistreatment (incl. religious deception) → suspicious of everyone; belligerent; defensive

Disappointed by a weak or hypocritical Christian → avoids friendship; never lets self be vulnerable

Beliefs →

Attitudes and personality:

“The Scriptures are hard to understand” → suspicious of all preachers Or, → “preacheritis” (over-dependence on someone else’s beliefs); “Let me ask my preacher”;

“Everybody’s going to heaven” → broad minded; tolerant of, and unwilling to rebuke, sin

“God wouldn’t send someone to Hell for that!” → moral compromise

Attitudes → Actions:

Unrepentant (“I’m fine the way I am.”) → unapproachable; no sorrow for sin; won’t hear the gospel

Prideful (“We can do this *my* way or the *wrong* way.”) → never yielding; unable to make peace

Closed minded (“Don’t bother me with the facts”) → no growth

Vengeful (“I won’t let him get away with that!”) → no meekness; no mercy

Selfish (“The church owes me. . .”) → Always taking, never helping; (“Give, give!” **Proverbs 30:15**)

Before we fill too many pages with examples, let’s focus on a few important lessons:

- **The same factor can have opposite effects.** (E.g., Difficulty understanding the Scriptures can make one person give up altogether on ever understanding God’s will and can make another person attach himself to a preacher for explanations of every simple Bible verse. Sadly, some religions and some preachers encourage this.) “The same sun that melts butter hardens clay.”
- **Opposite factors can have the same effect.** (E.g., Attitudes both of feeling *superior* to others and feeling *inferior* to others can tempt people to feel detached from the body of Christ, **1 Corinthians 12:12-27**)
- **Some factors keep reinforcing themselves.** (E.g., a lack of study→ ignorance of the Scriptures → lack of study)
- **Some factors work to a Christian’s advantage; some don’t.** Some people are naturally eager to help. They like to be around people, and they see the good in everyone. Going to church is easy and enjoyable for them. Other people are sour, backwards, critical of others, suspicious or selfish. Going to church is a dreaded chore and can even fuel their bad attitude. Think about **Hebrews 11:24-25** in this light. Try to consider others to stir up love and good works, and try to put aside thoughts that tempt us toward the wrong “manners”.
- **We can control our beliefs.** We can choose to believe the Bible. . . or not. (**Romans 10:17**)
- **We can control our way of thinking.** For example, we can choose how to respond to trials. (**James 1:2-4**) When we get thrown down harder and harder in life, we can be like a wet rag or like a rubber ball - we can get flatter, or we can bounce that much higher.
- Within certain limits, **we can control our circumstances.** If we choose to marry, we can choose *whom* we (re-)marry. (**Matt. 19:1-12; 1 Corinthians 7**) Our choices can have a profound impact on our relationship with God as well as on our daily service to Him. Notice the terrible situation and its impact on God’s people in **Ezra 9 and 10**. The ones opposing God’s will (like Meshullam, **Ezra 10:15**) were those whose families had made the ungodly choices (even intermarrying with Tobiah’s family! **Nehemiah 6:18**) For another example, we can choose to work or be lazy (**Proverbs 6:9-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-11**). We may become poor, hungry “leeches” or we can become able to provide for ourselves and even able to share with others. (**Ephesians 4:28**)
- **We can control our attitudes.** After all, Jesus blesses people based largely on their attitudes. We can pray for good attitudes, and we can control our thoughts while we pray. For example, we can choose to trust God, or we can choose to doubt Him, **James 1:5-8**)

When I Say, “I Am a Christian”

When I say, “I am a Christian,”
I’m not shouting, “I am saved”;
I’m whispering, “I get lost,”
That’s why I chose this way.

When I say, “I am a Christian,”
I don’t speak of this with pride;
I’m confessing that I stumble
And need someone to be my guide.

When I say, “I am a Christian,”
I’m not trying to be strong;
I’m professing that I’m weak
And pray for strength to carry on.

When I say, “I am a Christian,”
I’m not bragging of success;
I’m admitting I have failed
And cannot ever pay the debt.

When I say, “I am a Christian,”
I’m not claiming to be perfect;
My flaws are too visible,
But God believes I’m worth it.

When I say, “I am a Christian,”
I still feel the sting of pain;
I have my share of heartaches
Which is why I seek His name.

When I say, “I am a Christian,”
I do not wish to judge;
I have no authority;
I only know I’m loved.

by Carol Wimmer

Lesson 3: Self-Examination

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

2 Corinthians 13:5

God's people have always been willing and even eager to make sure that they are right with God. Although self-examination is sobering and often painful, we must constantly watch ourselves to be on guard against sin. David meditated on his actions in light of God's word:

Psalm 119:59 I thought about my ways, And turned my feet to Your testimonies.

Psalm 19:12 Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults.

Job asked for God's help in examining himself.

Job 13:23 How many are my iniquities and sins? Make me know my transgression and my sin.

David also asked for God to examine him.

Psalm 26:2 Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart.

Psalm 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; **24** And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

But in spite of David's good attitude (he was even called a man after God's own heart, **Acts 13:22**), David fell into a series of sins regarding Bathsheba. (**2 Samuel 11, 12**)

Jeremiah encouraged the Israelites in this way:

Lamentations 3:40 Let us search out and examine our ways, And turn back to the LORD; **41** Let us lift our hearts and hands To God in heaven. **42** We have transgressed and rebelled. . .

So it's not enough to examine ourselves once, or just once in a while. Even *before we become* Christians, we examine ourselves and realize that we are lost. *In the process of becoming* Christians, we turn away from our sins, that is, we repent. Once we *are* Christians, we will still sin, and so we will still need to repent from time to time.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. **2** And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

Notice, also, the example of Simon. After he became a Christian, he sinned and was told to "Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you." (**Acts 8:22**)

Christians are told to examine themselves every time they take the Lord's Supper.

1 Corinthians 11:27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. **28** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. **29** For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. **30** For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. **31** For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. **32** But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

Even when we seek to help others throw off their burden of sin, we are expected to examine ourselves and monitor both our attitude and our actions.

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. **2** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. **3** For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives

himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load.

In the next few lessons, we will examine what we have (or have not) done in order to become Christians. We will question our salvation and compare it to the pattern revealed in God's word. This is part of what Paul means when he says,

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

We must examine ourselves and be willing to question what we believe if we expect those people with whom we study to examine *themselves*. Truth does not fear investigation. The only thing that will suffer from honest investigation is error. In fact, consider the example of the apostle Paul himself. He was “formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man” before he became a Christian -- while he was “ignorant” of God's will. **(1 Timothy 1:12-13)** Ironically, he thought he serving God when he was persecuting Christians.

Acts 26:9 “Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. **10** “This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. **11** “And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.”

Paul even stated once that he had always lived according to his conscience. **(Acts 23:1)** This was unbelievable to the Jews because Paul had made a 180° turn-around in his life. Unfortunately, if we are misled or misinformed, our conscience will only push us farther into error, allowing us, like Paul, to continue in our ignorance. When we learn the truth, we might have to change our beliefs, or change our ways, or even, like Paul, change religions. Thanks to God's mercy, Paul had a chance to examine himself in light of the truth, and he turned from his misguided service to God and became a wonderful instrument of God.

There are several interesting examples of patterns that appear in the Bible. God gave a *pattern* to Noah for building the ark **(Genesis 14-22)**. He gave a *pattern* to Moses for building the tabernacle **(Exodus 25:9, 40; 26:30)**. He has given us a *pattern* for Christian living **(Philippians 3:17; 2 Timothy 1:13)**. He has also given us a pattern to follow for being saved in the first place! This pattern is seen clearly by studying every example of conversion to Christ.

We must be careful to look for the right examples. In other words, let's not look in the Old Testament, before Jesus died, expecting to find someone becoming a Christian. The same goes for the example of the thief on the cross. He died before Christ was raised from the dead and before Jesus told his apostles what to go and preach. **(Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16)** So we look for examples of people being converted *after the resurrection*. We find 10 such examples, all in the book of Acts. There are many passages about salvation in the books of Romans through Revelation, but keep in mind that those books (or “letters”, or “epistles”) were written to people who were already Christians.

As in the ten examples (which we will study in the coming lessons), everyone's salvation will be *different* in how they learned about Christ, in what obstacles they had to overcome and exactly where they were in terms of spiritual development when they were saved. But everyone's salvation will be the *same* in how they obeyed Jesus' instructions. **(Mark 16:16)**

Then as we read further in the New Testament, we also see that the examples of the apostles who worked with all the churches make up a pattern for us to follow in terms of both the worship and the work of the church. May God bless us all as we begin seeing these patterns for us in God's word.

Lesson 4: Self Examination of Salvation

Please answer these questions about your own personal, religious experience.

1) Have you ever been saved? Yes No

2) If so, when? (Give date and time as closely as possible.)

3) What were you thinking at that time that caused you to want to be saved?

4) What did you have to do to be saved?

5) Did you pray for salvation? Yes No

6) Have you ever been baptized? Yes No

7) If so, why?

8) What does baptism do for a saved person?

9) What does prayer do for an unsaved person?

10) How do you know you're saved?

11) What would you teach someone to do if they wanted to be saved, and what Bible verses would you use?



Lesson 5: Ten Examples of Salvation

IMPORTANT: Before you work on this page, *write down* answers to the questions on the previous page. This will greatly help your later study.

In **Acts 3:19**, Peter preached, “Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” We know various details of 10 stories of conversion in the book of Acts. These 10 stories are the *only Bible examples* (after Jesus was raised from the dead) that show what people did in response to gospel preaching. Many other passages teach *about* being saved, but these are the only detailed examples of people actually *doing* it. Many passages also speak to people who are already Christians, telling them how to *stay* saved and how to grow as Christians, but these 10 stories are the only examples of *non-Christians becoming Christians*.

We see a desire for the truth, open-minded reception of the gospel message, eagerness and humility in obeying what they were told to do, and joy after doing it. Because of their good attitudes and based on their new-found faith, the people in these examples took obedient action in order to become Christians. Some of the stories tell what the people did afterwards, but most stories end as soon as the people become Christians.

In each case, the people heard the gospel being preached and were saved, and the passages that say so have already been filled in for you on the grid. For each of the other actions given in this grid (Believed, Repented, Confessed, Were Baptized), list the verse that mentions it.

- You may have to make some logical assumptions. For example, Peter told the Jews to repent (**Acts 2:38**), so when they followed his other instructions (**Acts 2:41**), we can assume they also repented. (In fact, we draw the logical conclusion from **Mark 16:16** in order to know that some of the people were saved.)
- When you finish, some of the spaces will be blank because the text simply doesn't mention every action in every example, but you will still see a pattern that matches what Jesus said in **Mark 16:16**. It is this very pattern, given 10 times, that answers, “What must I do to be saved?”

Heard the gospel	Believed	Repented	Confessed	Were Baptized	Result
3000 Jews 2:1-47					Sins remitted Acts 2:38, 41, 47
Samaritans 8:5-12					Saved Mark 16:16
Simon 8:13					Saved Mark 16:16
Ethiopian 8:26-40					Rejoiced Acts 8:39
Saul 9:1-18; 22:1-16					Sins washed away Acts 22:16
Cornelius 10:1 - 11:18					Saved Acts 11:14
Lydia 16:14-15					Saved Acts 16:14, 15
Jailer 16:25-34					Rejoiced greatly Acts 16:34
Corinthians 18:8					Washed/Saved 1 Cor. 6:11; 15:2
Ephesians 19:1-7					Redeemed/Saved Eph. 1:7; 2:8

Match the lesson to the example(s) from the book of Acts.

_____	The method of baptism is immersion.	a. 3000 Jews	2:1-47
_____	It's <i>water</i> baptism, not Holy Spirit baptism, that saves.	b. Samaritans	8:5-12
_____	Baptism is "for the remission (or, forgiveness) of sins."	c. Simon	8:13
_____	Baptism is how a person washes away his sins, while calling on the name of the Lord.	d. Ethiopian	8:26-40
_____	A personal miracle or vision won't substitute for hearing the word of God. (2 examples)	e. Saul	9:1-18; 22:1-16
_____	Some people need to be rebaptized.	f. Cornelius	10:1 - 11:18
_____	Christ can be preached from the Old Testament. (2 examples)	g. Lydia	16:14-15
_____	Evil, immoral people can be saved. (2 examples)	h. Jailer	16:25-34
_____	Even good, prayerful people need to be saved. (2 examples)	i. Corinthians	18:8
_____	Even 3 days' worth of a <i>believing</i> sinner's prayer won't wash away sin.	j. Ephesians	19:1-7
_____	The need for baptism is urgent. (3 examples)		
_____	Baptism brings great joy to the obedient believer. (2 examples)		
_____	Some people need to change religions. (2 examples)		
_____	It matters <u>why</u> you're baptized. (2 examples)		

Match the following passages to the teachings about baptism.

_____	Baptism makes disciples.	a. Matt. 28:18-20
_____	When we are baptized into Christ, we put on Christ.	b. Rom. 6:3-4
_____	Baptism saves us like water saved Noah.	c. Gal. 3:27
_____	The church is cleansed by the washing of water with the (power of the) word.	d. Eph. 4:5
_____	Baptism is the cutting off the old man of sin.	e. Eph. 5:26
_____	Baptism is a burial and a resurrection to a newness of life.	f. Col. 2:11-13
_____	There is only one baptism.	g. Titus 3:5
_____	Baptism is an appeal for a clean conscience to God.	h. 1 Pet. 3:21
_____	There is a washing of regeneration that is different from the renewal of the Holy Spirit.	

Other Lessons from the 10 Examples in Acts

- 1) What a Christian should do when he sins - **Acts 8:22**; Notice Simon's condition in **Acts 8:13-24**. He was saved! "Once Saved, Always Saved"
- 2) Miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit could only be passed on by the hands of an apostle - **Acts 8:12-18**;
- 3) Christians need, and naturally seek, each other's company - **Acts 16:15**.

Lesson 6: The Salvation Puzzle

Who/What saves a man?

- **The Holy Spirit**
Renewal
Titus 3:3-7
- **The Father**
Love
Kindness
Mercy
Grace
Ephesians 2:1-10
Titus 3:3-7
- **The Son**
His life and death
Matthew 1:21
1 Tim 1:15
Romans 5:9-10

The gospel
1 Corinthians 15:1-5
Romans 1:16
James 1:21
- **The man himself**
Attitudes
Matthew 5:3-6
James 4:8-10
2 Thessalonians 2:10

Faith
John 3:16
Acts 16:31

Obedience
Hebrews 5:9
2 Thessalonians 1:8
Romans 6:17
1 Peter 1:22
Repentance - **Acts 17:30**
Confession - **Romans 10:9**
Calling upon the name of
the Lord - **Acts 2:21**
Baptism - **Mark 16:16**

Who/What does *not* save a man?

- **Anyone/Anything else**
Other Saviors (**John 14:6; Acts 4:12**)
Other men (**2 Cor. 5:10**)
Ceremony (Naaman, **2 Kings 5**)
The preacher (**1 Cor. 1:12-15**)
A personal miracle
Saul still had sins to wash away, **Acts 9:3-6, 12, 22:16**
Cornelius was told to call a preacher, **Acts 10:3-6**
Holy Spirit baptism didn't save Cornelius, **Acts 10:44-48**
The Scriptures should've convinced the rich man,
Luke 16:29-31

The "wrong" baptism
Not in Jesus' name, **Acts 19:1-7**
Not a believer, such as infants, **Mark 16:16**
Not immersion, **Acts 8:38; John 3:23**
Works of righteousness, **Ephesians 2:8-9**
- **Anything less**
Some people's "salvation" is like a jigsaw puzzle with pieces missing.
- **Anything only**
Faith (**James 2:24**, ". . . not by faith only")
Calling on the Lord (**Matthew 7:21** mentions obedience, too.)
Grace (**Ephesians 2:8-9** speaks of grace and faith.)
Confession (**Romans 10:9-10** lists confession and faith.)
Baptism (All "baptism" passages tell of faith's importance.)
Sincerity (Saul, **Acts 26:9-11; 23:1; 1 Tim. 1:12-13**, was sincerely *wrong*.)
Prayer (Saul of Tarsus, **Acts 9:11-12; 22:16**: "Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins . . .")

Illustration: Jericho - **Joshua 6**: God's grace and the people's faithful obedience caused the walls to fall.

Illustration: A burning house: What saves a man? The water, the hose, the firemen, or the neighbor who called "911"?
Answer: All of the above!

Who/What does *not* save a man?

- **Anyone/Anything else**

- Other Saviors (**John 14:6; Acts 4:12**)

- Other men (**2 Corinthians 5:10**)

- Ceremony (Naaman, **2 Kings 5**)

- The preacher (**1 Corinthians 1:12-15**)

- A personal miracle

- Saul still had sins to wash away, **Acts 9:3-6, 12, 22:16**

- Cornelius was told to call a preacher, **Acts 10:3-6**

- Holy Spirit baptism didn't save Cornelius, **Acts 10:44-48**

- The Scriptures should've convinced the rich man, **Luke 16:29-31**

- The "wrong" baptism

- Not in Jesus' name, **Acts 19:1-7**

- Not a believer, such as infants, **Mark 16:16**

- Not immersion, **Acts 8:38; John 3:23**

- Works of righteousness, **Ephesians 2:8-9**

- **Anything less**

- Some people's "salvation" is like a jigsaw puzzle with pieces missing.

- **Anything only**

- Faith (**James 2:24**, ". . . not by faith only")

- Calling on the Lord (**Matthew 7:21** mentions obedience, too.)

- Grace (**Ephesians 2:8-9** speaks of grace and faith.)

- Confession (**Romans 10:9-10** lists confession and faith.)

- Baptism (All "baptism" passages tell of faith's importance.)

- Sincerity (Saul, **Acts 26:9-11; 23:1; 1 Timothy 1:12-13**, was sincerely *wrong*.)

- Prayer (Saul of Tarsus, **Acts 9:11-12; 22:16**: After three days of praying while fasting, he was told, "Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins . . .")

Two Illustrations:

Jericho (**Joshua 6**): God's grace and the people's faithful obedience made the walls fall.

A burning house: *What saves a man?* The water, the hose, the firemen, or the neighbor who calls "911"? **Answer:** All of the above!

The Bible Pattern versus Human Ideas

From looking at the 10 examples of conversion in Acts, we see *no pattern of circumstance*. In other words, everyone had a unique experience in coming to believe in Jesus. However, there is, indeed, a very clear *pattern of conversion*. In other words, in spite of their unique experiences, they all ended up doing the very same things in order to be saved. As **Romans 6:17** states:

God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

The “form of doctrine” is the teaching to which every believer conforms. The New Testament was first written in Greek, and the Greek word for “form” is the word for a mold, or matrix. Molten metal is poured into it, and every lump of metal that is poured *in* comes *out* with the exact same shape as every other lump of metal.

But in spite of the clear pattern of conversion in the Bible, there are many schemes of men. Various denominations teach a wide variety of **human ideas** about what saves a non-Christian. But by simply reading the Bible passages carefully, especially the conversions in Acts, these false doctrines are exposed.

Many false teachings center around a misunderstanding of the place of baptism, so let’s first examine **three Bible teachings about baptism**:

1) There is only one baptism. Ephesians 4:5 The Bible refers to several other baptisms, both literal and figurative, but when it comes to church doctrine (notice the “seven ones” in **Ephesians 4:4-6**), there is only one baptism.

2) Baptism has only one purpose - the forgiveness of sins. This is described in various ways (cutting off sin, for example) and leads to salvation with all the related blessings. This one purpose is mentioned in *every passage* about baptism. For example,

Baptism makes disciples. **Matthew 28:18-20**

When we are baptized into Christ, we put on Christ. **Galatians 3:27**

Water *alone* does *not* save. Every passage that mentions baptism also mentions faith.

But **water baptism does, indeed, save!** **1 Peter 3:21**

Baptism is an appeal for a clean conscience to God. **1 Peter 3:21**

The church is cleansed by the washing of water with the (power of the) word. **Eph. 5:26**

Baptism is the cutting off the old man of sin. **Colossians 2:11-13**

Baptism involves a burial and a resurrection to a newness of life. **Romans 6:3-4**

No passage assigns *any other purpose* to baptism. If someone says it’s an “outward sign of an inward grace,” begin your Bible study by simply asking him to find the verse that teaches that!

3) There is only one baptism that was ever commanded. While God administered Holy Spirit baptism directly to the apostles in **Acts 2** and to the household of Cornelius in **Acts 10**, the audience in both cases was commanded to be baptized. There had already been baptism in the Holy Spirit, so the baptism lacking was *water baptism*. **Titus 3:5** shows simply that there is a washing of regeneration that is different from the renewal of the Holy Spirit.

Now let's look at some common **human ideas** about what saves a non-Christian.

1) Faith only. Denominational teachings often say that a man is saved at the point when he believes in Jesus Christ and accepts Him as Savior. So the teachings usually include *actions* of hearing the word, believing it, confessing faith in Christ, and perhaps even praying. So "faith only" may be an unfair label.

The sticking point is usually baptism, and people often get hung up because of a misunderstanding of the Bible's teachings about man's obedience to the gospel. (See **2 Thessalonians 1:8; Romans 2:8**) Specifically, it is claimed that baptism is a "work" and so can have no part in salvation, based on passages such as **Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 4:4-5; 11:6**.

Being baptized is, indeed, a "work," but *believing* in Jesus is "the work of God" (**John 6:28-29**) and repenting of sins is a *mental* action, or act of the will. Confessing faith in Christ is also an action. (**Romans 10:9-10**) There is an important difference between *works of righteousness* (obedience to God's law which lets us claim salvation on the basis of our own works, as could be said for Jesus' obedience to the Law of Moses) and *works of faith* (obedience which *demonstrates* our faith, and appeals to God for salvation on His terms of grace).

Faith *and* works, *together*, justify a man. (**James 2:14-26**) The books of James and Romans approach the story of Abraham from different viewpoints in order to teach different aspects of the truth. (**Genesis 15:1-6; 22:1-18**) Whatever Abraham did, and whatever is said about Abraham does not change the Bible's teachings about baptism or about the pattern for becoming a Christian which we have studied in recent lessons.

2) The Sinner's Prayer.

"Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, dead in sins, and cannot save myself. I hereby accept you, Lord, as my personal Savior, and thank you, Lord, for eternal salvation. Amen."

Here is a classic example of a doctrine invented by man. It may contain Biblical phrases and express godly attitudes, but the prayer, itself, is not in the Bible, and there is *no example* of a non-Christian being *told* to pray, and no example of a non-Christian being *saved* at the point when he prays.

In fact, the example of Saul shows someone with new-found faith in Jesus Christ who has all the right attitudes. He prayed with fasting for *three days* (**Acts 9:1-11**), but God sent a preacher who did *not* tell him, "God has saved you; go in peace," but commanded him, "Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins. . . ." (**Acts 22:12-16**) Saul's prayers had not washed away his sins!

3) The direct operation of the Holy Spirit apart from any action of man. Notice that in each of the 10 examples in Acts, the people heard God's word being preached and were expected to take action. Although non-Christians are, indeed, dead in sin and unable to save themselves (see **Ephesians 2:1-10**), non-Christians are called to obedience. "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." (**Acts 2:40**, KJV)

4) A personal miracle. Consider the roles that miracles, and divine intervention played in . . .

Acts 2 - Holy Spirit baptism on the apostles

Acts 8:5-12 - Philip's miracles in Samaria

Acts 8:26-40 - The Holy Spirit's guidance of Philip to the Ethiopian

Acts 9:1-18 - Saul's heavenly vision and miraculous healing, and

Acts 10 - The angel's conversation with an angel, Peter's heavenly vision and dialogue with God, and Holy Spirit baptism on Cornelius and his household (compare **Acts 11:1-18**) [Notice, also, the notes, above, under 3) There is only one baptism that was ever commanded.]

In every case, the miracles either served to show that the preaching was from God, or served to bring the sinner together with a preacher who could tell him what to do to be saved.

Lesson 7: 3,000 Jews (Acts 2)

Notes and Questions on the 10 Conversions

Summary

The apostles receive miraculous power when they receive the Holy Spirit. They immediately preach Jesus as Lord and Christ to a huge crowd of Jewish worshippers. Those who believe are saved and develop a close relationship. They spend their time worshipping God and helping each other, and are well received by the people at large.

Notes

The coming of the Holy Spirit in this chapter fulfilled many prophecies, including the promises of Jesus in **John 14 - 16**, **Mark 9:1** and **Acts 1:5, 8** (compare **Luke 24:49**). Peter said that the Holy Spirit's coming was the subject of Joel's prophecy in **Joel 2:28-32**.

The apostles' miraculous power included the ability to speak in languages that they didn't know (**2:4**). It's hard to know just how many languages would have had to have been spoken in order to reach the whole audience. If there were more languages than apostles, there may have been some miraculous help to the hearers. The places represented included the extreme edges of the Roman Empire: NE - Parthia; E - Judea; SE - Arabs; NW - Rome; N - Cappadocia; S - Egypt and Cyrene.

The Jews' evening started at 6:00 p.m. and lasted 12 hours. Then their day started at 6:00 a.m. and lasted 12 hours. Evening always came first, as in Genesis 1. The third hour of the day, then, was 9:00 a.m.

Peter preached the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Because his audience was Jewish, he quoted three times from the Old Testament. His introduction explained the coming of the Holy Spirit. Then he summarized Jesus' life. He quoted from the Psalms to make two points: 1) The Christ would be resurrected. Jesus, not David, had been resurrected - - Peter had seen the empty tomb and had seen Jesus Himself. So Jesus was the Christ. 2) The Lord would ascend to God's right hand. (Peter used the same passage that Jesus had used to stump the Pharisees, **Matthew 22:41-46**.) Jesus had ascended, (Peter had watched Him go!) so Jesus was Lord.

Acts 2:27 in the King James Version reads, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell. . ." This is simply a poor translation and can be very confusing. The Greek word is "Hades," meaning death or the realm of the dead. The words for hell ("torment") are "gehenna" and "basanos." Jesus never went to torment. He told the thief on the cross that they were going to Paradise. (**Luke 23:43**) The story of the rich man and Lazarus (**Luke 16:19-31**) describes the realm of the dead (Hades, **v. 23**), as having two parts: Abraham's bosom (obviously Paradise) and torment. Jesus went to the pleasant part of Hades. The same confusion arises in **Matthew 16:18**, where Jesus says of the church, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (KJV) This actually reads, "The gates of Hades . . ." Clearly, Satan's dominion (hell) often prevails against the church by leading the saints into temptation and sin. But death (Hades) can never harm the church.

3,000 were saved on Pentecost, but 3,000 may have been only a small percentage of the number of Jews assembled. Remember that they had come from all over the Roman Empire.

The disciples' obedience (**v. 41**), spiritual activities (**v. 42**), steadfastness (**v. 42**), fear (**v. 43**), generosity (**vv. 44-45**), association (**v. 46**), joy (**v. 46**), sincerity (**v. 46**) and good reputation (**v. 47**) are all important aspects of the pattern of New Testament Christianity. Their new lives had started from the apostles' preaching and were continually guided by the apostles' teaching, or doctrine.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit, verses 1-13

- 1) Describe the people in the audience for these events. (Hint: v. 5)

- 2) What did they hear that made them come together?
- 3) What were the apostles talking about, and what was so amazing?

The First Gospel Sermon, verses 14-36

4) vv. 14-21 -

Summarize
the sermon.

vv. 22-24 -

vv. 25-32 -

vv. 33-35 -

v. 36 -

- 5) On whom had God promised to pour His Spirit?
- 6) To whom would salvation come, according to Joel?
- 7) What two things did the Christ accomplish that David didn't do?
 - a.
 - b.

The Start of the Church, verses 37-47

- 8) What promise was Peter talking about in verse 39?
- 9) To whom was the promise?
- 10) Describe what happened among those who "gladly received his word."

Lesson 8: Some Samaritans, A Sorcerer, And A Treasurer (Acts 8)

Notes and Questions on the 10 Conversions

Summary

The execution of Stephen encourages the Lord's enemies. A severe persecution starts, and the disciples (but not the apostles) flee Jerusalem.

Philip goes north to preach in neighboring Samaria, and the gospel enjoys great success.

Notes

Ironically, persecution caused the gospel to spread.

Philip could do miracles, but the apostles came from Jerusalem and laid hands on the disciples to impart the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Holy Spirit did not automatically follow water baptism.

People always went "down" from Jerusalem even if they were traveling north because Jerusalem is on a mountain. Gaza, Azotus and Caesarea are all cities along the Mediterranean coast of Palestine. Gaza is WSW of Jerusalem. Caesarea is N of Azotus which is NE of Gaza.

Ethiopia is an African country SW of Palestine, and the treasurer may have been a black man. Strictly speaking, eunuchs are castrated men, and as such were often given the job of guarding the royal harem. From this practice, the term "eunuch" came to be applied to any officer, even married men. (E.g., the Hebrew word for eunuch, <sis>, is translated "officer" in **Genesis 39:1**.)

The Samaritans serve as an example that preaching, not miracles, converts souls to Christ.

Simon serves as a clear example of

- 1) the gospel's power to convert prideful people,
- 2) how a person's old life-style can corrupt his Christian walk,
- 3) how quickly a new Christian may sin, and
- 4) how a Christian receives forgiveness.

The treasurer serves as an example of

- 1) the gospel's power to overcome differences in race and culture,
- 2) diligent Bible study, even of difficult passages,
- 3) God's control over circumstances to bring together preachers and sinners,
- 4) the sense in beginning at the student's level of understanding, answering *his* questions,
- 5) the power of the Old Testament to preach Christ,
- 6) confession of faith in Christ,
- 7) the mechanics of water baptism,
- 8) the urgency of baptism, and
- 9) the joy that follows being baptized.

Some Greek manuscripts omit **verse 37**. The example of the treasurer still fits the pattern of all other conversions in Acts, and there are other passages about confession. (E.g., **Romans 10:9-10**)

Scattering to Samaria, verses 1- 8

- 1) To where did Christians scatter?
- 2) Who stayed in Jerusalem?
- 3) What did the scattered Christians do? . . . hide?
- 4) Verse 5 - Is this Philip the apostle? How do you know?
- 5) Besides preaching Christ, what did Philip do?

Simon the Sorcerer, verses 9-25

- 6) Was Simon the magician new to Samaria?
- 7) Put verse 9 in your own words.
- 8) Describe Simon's reaction to Philip (3 things).
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
- 9) What miraculous thing did Philip (the miracle worker) *not* do?
- 10) How and when did the Samaritans receive the Holy Spirit?
- 11) What did Simon try to do?
- 12) Should a Christian be re-baptized when he sins? Explain.
- 13) What could the apostles add to Philip's message? (See v. 25.)

The Ethiopian Treasurer, verses 26-40

- 14) Tell about 2 supernatural events involved in the treasurer's conversion.
 - a.
 - b.
- 15) **DIG:** What Old Testament passage was the eunuch reading?
- 16) Does "preaching Jesus" involve preaching about baptism?
- 17) Who suggested that the treasurer be baptized?
- 18) The treasurer went on his way doing what?
- 19) Philip went on his way doing what?

Lesson 9: Saul (Acts 9:1-31) **(Read *his version* of his conversion in Acts 22:3-21; 26:9-20)**

Notes and Questions on the 10 Conversions

Summary

In **Acts 7**, Saul was introduced as a collaborator in Stephen's execution. In **chapter 8**, he "made havoc of the church." In **chapter 9**, he sees the Just One and hears His voice. Saul the persecutor is convinced from that one, brief encounter that Jesus had been raised from the dead, had ascended to heaven, and was therefore Christ and Lord. He learned that his devotion to God had been pitifully misguided. (Compare **Romans 10:1-3**.)

Saul makes a 180 degree turn in his life, and in so doing becomes Saul the persecuted. The Jews lose their champion Christian chaser, and the church in the whole region has peace.

Notes

Damascus was about 130 miles north of Jerusalem. Saul was very determined to stop what he perceived as the Christian "heresy" from spreading.

Saul had been kicking "against the goads" (similar to cattle prods). In other words, because he was a zealous Jew, he should've known from the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ, but he was resisting the truth and God's guidance.

Saul's transition from Judaism to Christianity was complete in belief and practice, but the Jews never stopped persecuting him, and he never stopped loving his Jewish brethren. When Saul started preaching for the very people he had gone to persecute, he was feared by Christians and considered to be a traitor by the Jews. To get an idea of his predicament, imagine Hitler seeking asylum in the United States and later becoming a general in the U.S. Army. Saul had few, if any, friends, at this point in his life, but he remained committed to the Lord Jesus and to his service. He joined himself to Christians back in Jerusalem, although with difficulty. Thankfully, Barnabas makes his second appearance in the book of Acts, befriending and encouraging the outcast Saul, and defending his conversion to the Christians. The brethren responded well to Barnabas' example and words.

The Jews held considerable political power, as seen in their successful plots to have Jesus crucified and Stephen stoned. Of course, Saul himself was wielding this very power on his trip to Damascus. Once he was converted, however, Saul found himself politically powerless and under the equivalent of a warrant for his arrest in Damascus, but escaped back to Jerusalem. (See **2 Corinthians 11:32-33**.) He later escaped a Jewish assassination plot against him in Jerusalem. (His Jewish associates shared Saul's own former, deep hatred of Christians.) His new Christian brethren sent him back home to Tarsus (N of the island of Cyprus).

Saul's conversion serves as a clear example of

- 1) what does not save: sincerity, Bible knowledge, prayer or a personal miracle,
- 2) the need even for zealous, self-assured religious people to change religions,
- 3) the gospel's power to humble and motivate us, and
- 4) the sacrifice of personal power and position in order to serve the Lord.

Before Meeting Jesus (*Be sure to compare all three readings.*)

- 1) Who gave Saul authority to persecute Christians?
- 2) Describe Saul's attitude toward Jesus.

Meeting Jesus (*Be sure to compare all three readings.*)

- 3) What did Saul see? What did he hear?

- 4) What did his companions see? What did they hear?
- 5) What time of day was it?
- 6) What posture did Saul assume?
- 7) How did Jesus identify Himself?
- 8) Was it enough for Saul to be sincere in his religion?
(See **Acts 23:1; 26:9; 1 Timothy 1:13.**)
- 9) Was Saul saved on the road to Damascus? Support your answer.

After Meeting Jesus (*Again, be sure to compare all three readings.*)

- 10) Was Saul saved once he believed and prayed? Support your answer.
- 11) In what sense does Ananias call him "brother Saul" before Saul was baptized?
- 12) List 3 supernatural events associated with Saul's conversion.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
- 13) List three things that Saul did during his first three days in Damascus.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
- 14) Did God hear the prayer of Saul the sinner? (See **Isaiah 59:1-2; John 9:31.**)
- 15) Describe the mission that Jesus gave Saul.
- 16) Saul would suffer greatly for the name of Jesus. How is this "poetic justice"?
- 17) From **1 Timothy 1:12-17, 1 Corinthians 15:8-10, and Galatians 1:11-17**, describe Saul's attitude toward Jesus and toward himself.
- 18) What impact did Saul's conversion have on circumstances for the churches in Judea, Samaria and Galilee?

Lesson 10: Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48; 11:1-18)

Notes and Questions on the 10 Conversions

Summary

Cornelius was a pioneer in a new era in the kingdom of God -- He was the first Gentile convert.

God has a strong hand in all the events, from establishing Peter's credentials through miracles (**9:32-43**), to sending visions to both Peter and Cornelius, to baptizing Cornelius and his household in the Holy Spirit.

Peter's Jewish brethren call him on the carpet because of his association with Cornelius. But when Peter explains God's workings in the events of **Acts 10**, the Jews withdraw their objections.

Once the promise of the Holy Spirit has been extended to Jews and Gentiles, the disciples receive a new name, Christians. (**Acts 11:26**; cf. **Isaiah 62:2**.) The church in Antioch, as a truly multiracial church, becomes Saul's headquarters for preaching to the end of the earth. (**Acts 13-28**)

Notes

We don't know how long Philip was in Samaria or how long it took him to get to Caesarea (**Acts 8:40**), and we don't know the exact timing of chapters 8, 9 and 10. But we know that Jesus, in **Matthew 16:19**, had promised to give *Peter* the keys to the kingdom (i.e., to open it to Jews, as in **Acts 2**, and Gentiles, as in **Acts 10**).

It's ironic that when Peter received the vision about clean and unclean animals, he was staying with a tanner, whose trade in tanning and preserving hides would have made him ceremonially unclean and perhaps caused him to live out on the S edge of town.

God is no respecter of persons (**Acts 10:34**), but He is, indeed, a respecter of faith and obedience! (**10:35**) He grants special favors to the faithful *in every nation* on the same terms.

The Jews were accustomed to a special, exalted position in God's eyes (see **Romans 9:4-5**). They had a God-given command not to intermarry with other nations, and they often considered themselves superior to those in other races. It was very hard for them to accept the idea that non-Jews could be on equal footing with them. (Notice that Peter had to see a vision from God!) Racial prejudice and superior attitudes exist in many cultures. But prejudice between blacks and whites, for example, would have likely been seen as silly to the Jews, because they would have looked down on blacks and whites *alike* who were not Jews! Bible teachings on attitudes of prejudice and superiority abound, including **Romans 11, 1 Cor. 12:12-27, Galatians 3:26-29, and Eph. 2:14-18**.

Peter ties the events at Cornelius' house to the coming of the Holy Spirit in **Acts 2**. The promise was to the Jews, "and to all who are afar off." (**Acts 2:39**; compare **Ephesians 2:17**) Note that Peter does not quote from the Old Testament to his non-Jewish audience.

Cornelius' Vision, 10:1-8

- 1) What kind of man was Cornelius? Also, was he a Jew or a Gentile?
- 2) What was Cornelius doing when he saw the vision?
- 3) What purpose did the vision serve - - did it save him? (**See 11:14.**)

Peter's Vision, 10:9-16

- 4) Describe Peter's vision.
- 5) The Law of Moses gave strict dietary instructions. Why did Peter argue with the voice?

Peter's Preaching, 10:18-43

- 6) What lesson had Peter learned from the vision about animals?
- 7) What purpose had *Peter's* vision served for *Cornelius*?
- 8) How did Peter react to Cornelius' worship?
- 9) Who was waiting for Peter, and for what were they waiting?
- 10) **10:34-35 -**

Summarize
the sermon.

- vv. 36-38 -**
- vv. 39-41 -**
- vv. 42-43 -**

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit, 10:44-48

- 11) Find three phrases in vv. 44, 45, 47 that describe what happened during the preaching.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
- 12) What were Cornelius and his group then able to do?
- 13) What prophecies did this fulfill?
- 14) What was Peter's reaction?
- 15) **11:15** says that the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius "as upon us at the beginning." To what does that refer?
How is this with Cornelius different from what happened then?
- 16) **DIG:** Find where Jesus had said the quotation in 11:16.

Peter Defends God, 11:1-18

- 17) Specifically what was Peter's sin, according to those of the circumcision?
- 18) Tell what *God did or said* according to the following verses in **chapter 11**:
 - 9 -**
 - 12 -**
 - 13 -**
 - 15 -**
 - 18 -**
- 19) What was the reaction of "they that were of the circumcision"?

What About Cornelius' Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Cornelius was baptized with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit fell on him and his household (**Acts 10:44**), and they spoke in tongues. (**Acts 10:46**) This was "the same gift" as God had given the apostles (**Acts 11:17**), happening "as upon [them] at the beginning". (**Acts 11:15; 2:2-4**) This Holy Spirit baptism had been *promised* by Jesus (**Acts 1:5; 11:16**), but was not *commanded* by God or Peter, and was not administered by Peter (but rather by God Himself), so the subjects had no control over the baptism.

The reasons for Holy Spirit baptism are not entirely spelled out by God, except that it had been promised to "all flesh". (**Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17-21**) The only two times that it happened in the Bible were first to the apostles who were Jews (**Acts 2:2-4**) and later to Cornelius and his household who were Gentiles. (**Acts 10:44-46**)

Notice that God promised to "pour out His Spirit" (**Acts 2:17-18**) (i.e., Holy Spirit baptism), "and it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (**Acts 2:21**) So whatever the exact reasons for Holy Spirit baptism, it was a *separate matter from salvation*. In the case of Cornelius, Holy Spirit baptism served to "acknowledge" Cornelius and his household in the presence of the skeptical Jews (**Acts 15:8**) to show that there was no longer any difference between Jews and Gentiles in God's sight. (**Acts 15:9-11**) As wonderful a miracle as the Holy Spirit baptism was, the story of Cornelius was not finished.

What Happened Next?

After the Holy Spirit baptism (**Acts 10:44-46**), Cornelius actually underwent *another* baptism:
in water (**Acts 10:47**),
in the name of the Lord. (**Acts 10:48**)

Why Was Cornelius Baptized in Water?

Because it was commanded. Cornelius wanted "to hear all the things commanded [Peter] by God". (**Acts 10:33**) To forbid this water baptism would have been the same as withstanding God. (**Acts 10:47; 11:17**) After Cornelius was baptized in the Holy Spirit, he was still waiting to hear something be commanded. The only command Peter gave Cornelius was to be baptized in water. (**Acts 10:47-48**) Once this command was given, the story of Cornelius is finished, and the writer moves on to tell how Peter defended his preaching to the Gentiles.

To be saved. Peter was to tell Cornelius "words by which [he] and all [his] house will be saved" (**Acts 11:14**), or "what [he] must do". (**Acts 10:6**) Remember that the purpose for Holy Spirit baptism was a separate matter from salvation. Also recall that every passage about water baptism assigns only one purpose to water baptism -- salvation (also described as the remission of sins, washing away sins, etc.) (**Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21; etc.**)

Not to follow John the Baptist. The gospel of Jesus was proclaimed *after* the baptism which John preached (**Acts 10:37**), when *the apostles* were commanded to preach to the people. (**Acts 10:42**) After all, John did not preach the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, because those events had not yet happened when John died.

Lesson 11: The Faithful in Philippi (Acts 16:11-40)

Notes and Questions on the 10 Conversions

Summary

Because the Holy Spirit guides Paul through a dream, the gospel spreads to an important new city during Paul's second preaching tour. In spite of illegal and undeserved persecution, and partly *because* of the persecution, the gospel reaches two very different families in Philippi.

Notes

The narrator's (Luke's) use of pronouns indicates that he traveled with Paul from Troas to Philippi: "They [*Paul, Silas, Timothy*] came down to Troas" (16:8) and "we [*including the narrator*] sought to go into Macedonia." (16:10) Luke apparently stayed in Philippi when Paul, Timothy and Silas left, and "they came to Thessalonica." (17:1) When Paul passes through Macedonia later (during his third missionary tour), the "we" passages appear again. (20:5)

Lydia was already a worshipper of God, but was not a believer in Christ when Paul met her. Notice that it is only after Lydia was baptized that she might be judged "faithful to the Lord."

Lydia's conversion is an example of **1)** a businesswoman's obedience to the gospel, **2)** God's work on a receptive heart, **3)** the value of regularly assembling with others to worship, **4)** the lack of any need for a church building or formal service, and **5)** the strong, natural desire for fellowship with other Christians. As with all the examples, she was willing to change religions for the truth.

The masters of the slave girl encourage talk about God and the way of salvation as long as it lines their pockets. Once their income is stopped, we see their true attitude.

The jailer, on the other hand, is presented with no particular religious background, and may have been thinking only of his physical life (not his soul) when he asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" [Notice that he had just been interrupted from attempting suicide when he asked the question.] At any rate, Paul and Silas addressed the salvation of his soul, telling him to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (16:31) Paul and Silas did not try to tell the jailer everything that would ever be required of him at that first instant. After all, why tell someone to repent before he even believes in Jesus? That would be like telling someone which street to turn on before telling him how to get to the right town! They then preached the word of the Lord to him (v. 32), and the jailer showed his repentance by washing Paul's and Silas' wounds (v. 33), was baptized in the middle of the night (v. 33) and had fellowship with Christians (v. 34). *Only then* does it say that he "he rejoiced, having believed in God". (v. 34)

In contrast, Peter's audience in 2:37 *already had faith*, so he told them to repent and be baptized (2:38). The 10 examples of conversion in the book of Acts are consistent with each other; we simply find the different people at different points of attitude and faith. In all ten examples we see people believing and being baptized.

The jailer's conversion is an example of **1)** using every opportunity to preach the gospel, **2)** the urgency of being baptized, and **3)** the joy that accompanies obeying the Lord. As with Lydia, the gospel reaches the whole household of those hearing the word.

A person's baptism accomplishes the remission of his sins and marks the beginning of his new life as a Christian. As with most of the other examples of conversion, the stories about these people stop once they are saved. We might read briefly about their joy over their salvation or about their fellowship with other Christians, but they are now saved, so the story of Acts, which is primarily concerned with the spread of the gospel, moves on to other people in other places.

Paul had a unique position as a Jew who was also a Roman citizen. He used his citizenship to his advantage with the authorities, but only after allowing himself to be beaten with rods for the name of Jesus.

Lydia, 16:11-15

- 1) Paul had seen a man in a vision. Tell who he found in Philippi, and where.
- 2) What kind of woman was Lydia religiously and professionally?
- 3) What did the Lord do for her?
- 4) How would she have had a unique sphere of influence as a Christian?

The Philippian Jailer, 16:25-34

- 5) What were Paul and Silas doing at midnight?
- 6) What effect do you think this had on the other prisoners?
- 7) What happened because of an earthquake?
- 8) Why did the jailer want to kill himself?
- 9) **RESEARCH:** What other event in Acts tells us that the jailer was being sensible?
- 10) **SPECULATE:** Why did Paul and Silas not run away?
- 11) What was the jailer's question?
- 12) What do you think he had in mind when he asked it?
- 13) On what topic did Paul respond to the jailer?
- 14) What unique sphere of influence would the jailer have as a Christian?

"They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans!", 16:35-40

- 15) Whom did the magistrates send to release Paul and Silas?
- 16) What was Paul's response?
- 17) Why were the magistrates afraid?
- 18) What did the magistrates want Paul and Silas to do?
- 19) What did Paul and Silas do first?

Lesson 12: Many Corinthians (Acts 18:1-11)

Notes and Questions on the 10 Conversions

Summary

On his second preaching circuit, Paul visits Corinth, a large, metropolitan city at the center of trade in the Roman Empire. The Lord has many people in that city, and Paul spends a year and a half finding, converting and training them.

Notes

Paul worked a secular job in addition to preaching.

Corinth was the capital of the province of Achaia. "Achaia" refers to the southern part of what is now the modern country of Greece. Macedonia was the province in the northern part of that peninsula. Recall that Philippi was "the foremost city of that part of Macedonia". (**Acts 16:12**)

Paul's association with Aquila and Priscilla helps him now and pays dividends later in Ephesus. Aquila and Priscilla were Jews, and when Paul turned primarily to the Gentiles in Corinth, he moved in with Justus, apparently a Gentile, judging from his name. Ironically, only then does the ruler of the synagogue, Crispus, turn to the Lord.

The Corinthians' conversion is a simple example of people following the pattern of obedience to the gospel. We learn many additional lessons about the Corinthians from Paul's later writings to them in the books of First and Second Corinthians. Although the Corinthians are the ninth example of conversion in the book of Acts, they are the first case in which we can learn about their conversion directly from other Bible books. The 3,000 Jews in Jerusalem (**Acts 2**), the Samaritans, Simon and the treasurer (**Acts 8**) and Cornelius (**Acts 10**) have basically nothing said about them outside of the book of Acts. Paul (**Acts 9, 22, 26**) had things to say about his former life compared to his life as a Christian in other Bible books, but not directly about his baptism. Lydia and the jailer (**Acts 16**) had a letter to them from Paul included in the New Testament (Philippians), but nothing very specific is said about their conversion. With the Corinthians, however, we learn about their former sins, their baptism, what their baptism specifically did for them, and even their attitudes toward their baptism.

King James Version only: Match the words and phrases to their meanings. Leave 3 blanks on the right.

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|
| a. | wrought (v. 3) | _____ | be aggressive |
| b. | pressed (v. 5) | _____ | ironed |
| c. | raiment (v. 6) | _____ | was next door/shared a wall with |
| d. | joined hard (v. 7) | _____ | worked |
| e. | hold not thy peace (v. 9) | _____ | don't be quiet |
| | | _____ | pressured/compelled |
| | | _____ | clothing |
| | | _____ | went along reluctantly |

- 1) What couple did Paul stay with first in Corinth? Mr. _____ and Mrs. _____
- 2) Why had they left Italy? (Be sure to comment on their nationality.)
- 3) What was Paul's trade (besides preaching)?
- 4) How did Paul go about the task of preaching (where, when, and to whom)?
- 5) **RESEARCH:** Why did Timothy and Silas come to Paul, and what city did they come from?
- 6) **RESEARCH:** Paul "shook his raiment" at the blasphemers. Where had he done something similar?

- 7) What did Paul mean, "Your blood be upon your own heads"?
- 8) What worshiper did Paul stay with?
- 9) What influential Jew was converted?
Notice he was not only ruler of the synagogue but also ruler of all his household!
- 10) What command did the Lord give Paul in a vision?
- 11) What promise did Jesus give Paul about the work in Corinth?
- 12) How long did Paul stay in Corinth?

From 1 Corinthians 1:10-17:

- 13) In whose name had the Corinthians been baptized?
- 14) What effect was Paul trying to have on the Corinthians' minds by reminding them of their baptism?
- 15) Who had baptized most of the Corinthians?
- 16) Why was Paul glad that he had not done most of the baptizing?

From 1 Corinthians 6:9-11:

- 17) List some of the sins committed by the Corinthians before they became Christians.
- 18) To what event does **1 Corinthians 6:11** refer? Use as many supporting Scriptures as needed.

From 1 Corinthians 10:14-22; 11:17-22:

- 19) Tell some of the points that need to be learned from the Lord's Supper.

From 1 Corinthians 12:12-13:

- 20) Tell the point(s) Paul is making about baptism.

Lesson 13: A Dozen Ephesians (Acts 18:24 - 19:20)

Notes and Questions on the 10 Conversions

Summary

Paul begins his third preaching tour, again going overland from Antioch across Asia Minor. He had not spent much time in Ephesus previously, but now spends over two years there.

Notes

Aquila and Priscilla had housed Paul and had traveled with him from Corinth to Ephesus. **(18:18-19)** They corrected Apollos in private, giving us an example of a woman participating in spiritual work, but using appropriate methods. (Compare **1 Timothy 2:11-12**.)

The Ephesians had been as faithful as they knew to be and had even been baptized (in John's baptism), but they had not been baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus". Many people today are baptized for man-made purposes (i.e., any reason other than "for the remission of sins," **Acts 2:38**). God judges a person's faith when he confesses Christ (**Rom. 10:9**), and requires the right motive of belief and desire for salvation when someone is baptized, as well. (**Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21**) You may need to be baptized again, this time *for the right reason*, as these Ephesians did.

The Ephesians are the last of the ten examples of conversion. The ten cases form *no pattern of circumstance*. In fact, at least four preachers (including 2 apostles and 2 other disciples) preach in 8 regions over some 30 years in various private and public places. The people who hear the gospel are both men and women from a broad mixture of race, language, culture, religious background and wealth. But there is a *clear pattern of conversion* - a "form of doctrine," (**Rom. 6:17**) matching Jesus' promise in **Mark 16:16**, "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved."

The church in Ephesus started small but the word spread far and wide during Paul's stay.

The Ephesians' conversion is an example of **1)** being baptized for the right reason, even if it's not a person's first time to be baptized, **2)** the real meaning of "the name of the Lord", **3)** true, public repentance, **4)** the disciples having to separate themselves from their critics who had hard hearts, **5)** a willingness not only to confess that they had sinned, but also to "tell their deeds", and **6)** the sacrifice often associated with repentance.

Apollos, 18:23-28

- 1) Where was Apollos preaching?
- 2) From **vv. 24-25**, list some of his credentials for being a preacher.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
- 3) **(Choose one.)** His teaching was . . . **a.** deceptive **b.** incomplete, or **c.** unfounded
- 4) Who took him aside? Where were they mentioned before?
- 5) **SPECULATE:** How did they know the truth so well?

Paul Spreads the Word, 19:1-12

- 6) Why did Paul question the Ephesian disciples' baptism?
- 7) Describe their first baptism.
- 8) What was the problem with that baptism?

- 9) What was the solution?
- 10) In what sense, then, does Paul write to the Ephesians that there is “one baptism”?
(Ephesians 4:5)
- 11) How does Paul describe baptism in **Ephesians 5:26**?
- 12) Give some examples of why someone might have to be re-baptized nowadays.
- 13) When did the disciples receive the Holy Spirit?
- 14) What were they then able to do?
- 15) How long did Paul teach in the synagogue in Ephesus?
- 16) How long did Paul teach at the school of Tyrannus? What was the result?
- 17) Describe an unusual way in which the Lord bore witness to Paul's teaching.

The Lord's Word Prevails, 19:13-20

- 18) What happened to the seven sons of Sceva?
- 19) What was the reaction by the community?
- 20) Tell some things we learn here about evil spirits.

a.	c.
b.	d.
- 21) How was the “the name of the Lord Jesus” treated differently by the 12 who were baptized and by the seven who were battered by the evil spirit?

 Comment on **Matthew 7:21** with this in mind.

 Comment on **Matthew 28:19** with this in mind, also.
- 22) Describe the Ephesians' repentance.

 What was the result?
- 23) What modern books should be treated the same way?
- 24) Some say that when you confess your sins, you don't have to tell what sin it was - - you just have to admit you sinned. What do you think?
- 25) Describe the difference between repenting and confessing sins.