

TWENTY-SIX MODEL CASES

~ What must I do to be saved? ~

By

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INTRODUCTION to TWENTYSIX MODEL CASES OF CONVERSION FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Well may we ask, where can we find a reliable answer to this question, What Must I Do To Be Saved? Since God is NOT the author of confusion we will not find the answer in all the varied responses given by man. Nor can it be found in all the thousands of cults and denominations, especially those propagating doctrines of demons, coming as wolves dressed up in sheep's clothing, masquerading as ministers of righteousness. The one and only answer is found in a thorough search of the New Testament Scriptures, especially the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

Here God has given several case histories of conversion - becoming a Christian – under the New Covenant. If we are willing to discard our preconceived ideas and emotional attachments, we can find the answer without too much trouble.

What we see in the model cases of conversion in the book of Acts, is a consistent pattern of preaching and response to the gospel of Christ, which removes all the confusion currently present in the religious world today. We must avoid reading into the Bible our own ideas. We arrive at a true interpretation by comparing all the Scriptures on this topic.

We begin our search by looking at the great commission given by Christ after He purchased our salvation and rose from the dead. We must never forget that Christ loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.¹

Mathew records how Jesus told His followers to make disciples, baptising and teaching them.² In Mark He said "Go into the entire world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptised shall be saved."³ Luke, the writer of Acts, records Christ's words as follows, "That repentance and remission of sins be preached in His name to all nations."⁴

Discussion Questions over introduction

- 1. Who propagates doctrines of demons?
What causes confusion and contradiction in bible interpretation?*
- 3. Is there a contradiction between Luke's account of the Great Commission and those of Matthew and Mark?*

INTRODUCTION¹ Rev. 1:5b² Matt. 28:19-20³ Mark 16:15-16⁴ Luke 24:47

THE 3,000 INTERNATIONAL JEWS

~ Model Number One, Acts 2:36-47 ~

Peter was the first to practice under this new commission given by Christ, when on the day of Pentecost he preached that God had made Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Many listeners were convicted of their sin and cried out, "What must we do?"¹ Peter, faithful to Christ's commission, preached repentance and forgiveness of sins. What he actually said was, "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive, as a gift, the Holy Spirit."²

In this very first model we see that there was: the preaching of the gospel; the convicting of the enquirer; a desire to be saved from the guilt and penalty of sin; repentance and obedience in baptism for the remission of sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We note in the record, that those who received this God-given message were baptized, without delay, and added to the church.³ We are told that God was adding to the church those who were being saved,⁴ i.e. those who gladly accepted the gospel message and obeyed without hesitation in the waters of baptism. While slightly different words are used and different aspects of conversion are highlighted, ALL other models will be consistent with this first case.

We note that the early disciples shared their material possessions according to NEED. They were united in heart and soul. Their meal tables became the center of joy and rich fellowship. Disciples of Christ met together to pray. They continued steadfastly in the apostles teaching and in breaking of bread. On the resurrection day, the first day of the week, they celebrated their deliverance from sin and Christ's victory over death. This is why it later became known as the Lord's Day.⁵

Discussion Questions

When did Peter use the keys of the kingdom, see

Mat. 16:19?

2. During conversion, what comes first, sadness or gladness?

3. What is the true motive for conversion?

4. Who does God add to His church? Be specific.

5. What place was given to music in the first church?

MODEL 1 (Acts 2:36-47)¹ Acts 2:37² Acts 2:38³ Acts 2:41⁴ Acts 2:47⁵ Rev. 1:10

THE 2,000 MEN AT THE GATE BEAUTIFUL

~ Model Number Two, Acts 3:14-21; 4:4 ~

Peter accuses the religious leaders of killing the Prince of life whom God raised from the dead.¹ He then told them to repent and be converted.² We recall how Peter told those on the Day of Pentecost, to 'Be saved (Save yourselves, KJV) from this perverse generation.' On this second occasion he says "Be converted", literally meaning to turn around. In the mind of the apostles this was synonymous with 'Repent and be baptised' from the first model. God does not set out to deliberately confuse us, especially in such a vital matter as our eternal salvation.

Peter is faithfully following the instructions given by Christ – to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins.

He says, 'that your sins may be blotted out and times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.'³ Peter uses different words but the same promise and same assurance was given as in the first model – forgiveness of sins and as a gift, the Holy Spirit.

Discussion Questions

1. What part did (do) we play in crucifying Jesus?

2. Is the sinner actively involved in his conversion?

3. Is 'repent and convert' in our second model, synonymous with 'repent and be baptized' in the first model? If not, why not?

4. Are the two promises given in both models synonymous?

MODEL 2 (Acts 3:10, 17-21, 26; 4:4, 31-35)¹ Acts 3:15² Acts 3:19³ Acts 3:19

THE MULTITUDES OF ADULT OUTSIDERS

~ Model Number Three, Acts 5:11-14, 29-32 ~

These unsaved people had seen the power of God and been struck with fear. They were not prepared to enter into the gathering of the saints.¹ As the early followers of Christ preached and taught Christ, not only in the temple, but also from house to house, they reached multitudes of individuals with their message. The weekly gathering around the Lord's Table was for the baptized believers.² Others remained outside. This service was not tailored for seekers.

Following their arrest, Peter and the other apostles, spoke of God exalting (Jesus Christ) to His right hand to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.³ Their method and their message is still the same. They preached Christ – the gospel – and obviously told sinners to repent and be baptised.

They promised them forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter tells his hearers that God only gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him.⁴

Discussion Questions

1. If unbelievers were afraid to attend church for the purposes stated in Acts 2:42, how were they converted?

*What was the purpose of the church gathering together:
to evangelise the lost or edify the saints,*

see 1 Cor.11:33; 14:12 & 26?

3. Is house-to-house evangelism effective today? If not, why?

4. Can those who refuse to obey the gospel in baptism claim to have received the gift of the Holy Spirit?
MODEL 3 (Acts 5:11-14, 29-32)¹ Acts 5:13² Acts 20:7; 1Cor. 11:27-29³ Acts 5:31⁴ Acts 5:32
THE TEMPLE PRIESTS

~ Model Number Four, Acts 6:7 ~

The disciples were now multiplying. A great number of the Jewish priests were obeying the faith – the body of truth presented to them by the apostles.¹ We saw on the day of Pentecost how God added those who gladly received the apostle’s word and were baptised. The same thing is happening on this occasion. God only has one gospel and one plan for man’s salvation. There is only one Lord, one faith and one baptism.² Christian baptism is both a spiritual and physical experience.

Obedience is essential to salvation. Remember the words of Samuel to king Saul, “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.” If we confess Christ as Lord then we must do the things He has commanded. While we must believe the facts of the gospel;³ we can only obey a likeness, or the form⁴ of these facts. We do so when we are buried in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life, having first died to sin.⁵

Discussion Questions

1. Is disobedience as sinful as witchcraft, iniquity, and idolatry?
2. If we refuse to obey the gospel, can we honestly call Christ, Lord & Master?
3. How can we obey the gospel facts, see 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Rom. 6:3-6?

MODEL 4 (Acts 6:7)¹ Acts 6:7² Eph. 4:4³ 1Cor. 15:1-4⁴ Rom. 6:17⁵ Rom. 6:3-5

THE SAMARITAN MEN AND WOMEN

~ Model Number Five, Acts 8:5-12 ~

Philip is our new preacher, but the message is still the same. He preached concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.¹ Peter had declared ‘that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved’², and that there is ‘no salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.’³ Paul was told, ‘...wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’⁴ When these Samaritans believed Philip they were baptised⁵ Remember, on the Day of Pentecost, how those who gladly received their (the apostles) word were baptised? As we saw in case three, they were both men and women who were accountable and aware of the gravity of their sin. Their innocence lost, they now came under the penalty of their sin and needed to repent and put their faith in Christ. In relation to salvation, we are all one in Christ Jesus. There is neither male nor female.⁶

It should, however, be noted here that although the Lord was responsible for baptizing more disciples than John,⁷ yet, when the children were brought to Him, He did not baptize them but simply blessed them.⁷ All infants need a Saviour since all have sinned, but they are not responsible for their parents sin.⁹ They are not accountable until they are capable of understanding God’s law – covetousness is a good example. Paul said he would not have known sin except through the law.¹⁰ Before possessing this knowledge, he was (spiritually) ALIVE! And so it would seem that all infants are covered by Christ’s sacrificial death.

It is only when we come to appreciate the meaning of lawlessness that we die spiritually.¹¹ It is because we are dead in trespasses and sins¹² that we need to be born again—new.

Discussion Questions

- How & when do we call on the name of Christ at our conversion?
Are infants fit and proper subjects for baptism? If not, why not?*

At what age does a child become accountable for their own sin? MODEL 5 (Acts 8:4-6, 12)¹ Acts 8:12² Acts 2:21³ Acts 4:12⁴ Acts 22:16⁵ Acts 8:12⁶ Gal. 3:28⁷ John 4:1⁸ Mark 10:13-16⁹ Ezek. 18:19,20¹⁰ Rom. 7:7¹¹ Rom. 7:8-11¹² Eph. 2:1-3

THE FAMOUS SORCERER

~ Model Number Six, Acts 8:13-24 ~

Along with the Samaritans, Simon also believed, was baptised and continued in their fellowship.¹ He then fell into a grave sin but was told to repent and pray. He quickly requested the apostles to pray for him.² We recall those words in 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” However, we see that Simon first believed and was baptised before being told to repent and pray for forgiveness. Prayer is a privilege given only to the people of God.

Since all sinners were required to believe and obey the same gospel message to receive the same blessings, we can assume that Simon and the Samaritans, although not specifically stated, did receive the same gift of the Holy Spirit to dwell in their lives. The text states that the Holy Spirit had not yet fallen upon any of them. But the record quickly affirms that they had been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.³ From this we are assured that they had received the gift. We also see that the 12 disciples of Apollos were baptised in the name

of the Lord Jesus to receive the Holy Spirit, who was not know to them previously, since they had only been baptised unto repentance in the name of John.⁴

Philip, the evangelist, was able to work great miracles because the apostles had laid hands on him. Among men, only the apostles, by the laying on of their hands, had the power to cause the Holy Spirit to fall on people; this is what Simon wanted to buy – the power to enable others to perform miracles, not the indwelling gift.

Discussion Questions

Was Simon a true convert to Christ?

When did Simon and the Samaritans receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?

Upon genuine repentance and true bible baptism, what two gifts are promised to those who believe and obey?

What power did Simon want to purchase with his money?

MODEL 6 (Acts 8:9-11, 13, 22-24)¹ Acts 8:13² Acts 8:22-24³ Acts 8:16⁴ Acts 19:2-5

THE ETHIOPIAN TREASURER

~ Model Number Seven, Acts 8:26-40 ~

The Treasurer of the Queen of Ethiopia had been to worship but was still in a lost state - like many today who go to church. As he searched the Scriptures Philip offered to guide him and preached unto him Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecy before him.¹ Because the Treasurer received his word he requested baptism.

Philip told him that he must first believe with ALL his heart – not just his head or portion of his heart. On hearing this, he confessed his belief that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.² Philip immediately baptised him without requiring anything more, as in all other cases of Bible conversion.

Your bible version may omit verse 37 of the eighth chapter. This is due to having modern translations which are based on a different (inferior) Greek text, which omits some five to eight thousand words found in the Received Text from which our older Bibles are translated. Be assured that it is not God who is the author of confusion! God's word are pure and preserved for all generations.³

Confession of faith in the fact that the resurrected Jesus was indeed the Son of God, was not an end in itself but an audible means of knowing if the candidate was a proper subject for baptism. Nothing more and nothing less was required for a visible or audible indication of a person's faith. Their testimony of conversion did not precede, but followed their baptism.

Discussion Questions

Should the gathering of the saints for edification and Breaking of Bread be designed to accommodate lost sinners—made more attractive to sinners?

Can simply reading the bible alone save a person?

See Rom. 10:13-17

Does 'preaching Jesus' involve or omit preaching faith, repentance, baptism, and steadfastness?

Are modern bible versions to be taken as literal authoritative translations of the Word of God?

MODEL 7 (Acts 8:27-28, 35-39)¹ Acts 8:35² Acts 8:37³ Ps. 12:6,7

INSOLENT PERSECUTING BLASPHEMER

~ Model Number Eight, Acts 9:1-18; 22:6-16 ~

Forced to his knees, Saul cried, "Lord, What do you want me to do?" The Lord told him to go into the city and there he would be told what he must do.¹ Three days Paul waited in fasting and prayer. No doubt, full of remorse. There was no joy for him just then, as his sins had not been washed away. However, he had had an incredible spiritual awakening!

Ananias, God's servant, was sent to restore Paul's sight and in order that Paul be filled with the Holy Spirit.²

On the steps of the barracks following his arrest, Paul gives his testimony, telling how Ananias told him to,

'Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'³ It is rather a moot question to debate whether Paul's sins were washed away in baptism or by calling on the name of the Lord. Moot, because we have seen how that baptism is only effective when performed in the name of the Lord Jesus

Christ. What is clear is that Paul's sins were not washed away on the Damascus road but three days later after he had obeyed the gospel. He obeyed as soon as he was told what he must do. From that moment on he was set aside unto God.

Before King Agrippa, Paul testified as to his commission from the Lord. While worded a little differently to the gospel accounts, nevertheless, in principle, we see the same instructions: "to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light (*repentance*), and from the power of Satan to God (*conversion*), that they may receive forgiveness of sins (*baptism into the death of Jesus*) and an inheritance among those who are sanctified (*the gift of the Holy Spirit*) by faith in Me (*public confession that Jesus is the Christ*)."⁴

Paul's gospel and Peter's gospel were the same. Moreover, Paul wrote 'if anyone, even an angel preached any other gospel let him be accursed.'⁵ The same gospel was preached to everyone alike.

Discussion Questions

1. Are fasting and praying, when joined together, signs of joy or contrition?
If it is possible, how can a mere human wash away his or her own sins?

Was Paul's commission different from Peter's and all the other apostles? If so, in what way was it different?

MODEL 8 (Acts 9:1-6, 17, 18; 22:6-16)¹ Acts 9:6² Acts 9:17³ Acts 22:16⁴ Acts 26:18⁵ Gal. 1:8-9

THE INHABITANTS OF LYDDA

~ Model Number Nine, Acts 9:32-35 ~

Lydda was located on the coastal Plain of Sharon between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean sea coast. Obviously there was a church in this town and its members were referred to as 'saints'.¹ This is the second occasion where followers of Christ are called saints—made holy, separated from the world and set apart to God.

While it is not actually stated, we can assume that as he did at the Gate Beautiful, Peter used the healing of Aeneas as an opportunity to preach the gospel. Scripture tells us that faith comes by hearing the word of God.² When this word is engrained into the heart it is able to save our souls.³ No doubt the godly lives of the saints made a real impact on all who lived in this community and added great authority to the apostle's message. In an earlier chapter we read that when the saints shared what they could with those in need the Apostles gave witness with great power and great grace was upon them all. This was not a social gospel of handouts to unbelievers.

Here the description 'turned to the Lord' is used as we would use repented, or the terms 'accepted Christ' or 'were saved'. This description 'turned to the Lord' sums up and includes all that God, through the apostles, required of seekers asking 'What must we do to be saved?' In those days, before denominational creeds and dogmas muddied the waters, it was not necessary to restate all the specific requirements of salvation on every occasion. Moreover, it would be deceitful to read into this our own ideas. We must compare Scripture with Scripture and let the Bible speak for itself.

Discussion Questions

What does the word 'saints' say about the state and character of God's people: and how does this help the preacher?

Why can we confidently assume that Peter preached the gospel on this occasion when nothing is said about him doing so?

What does the description 'turned to the Lord' convey?

MODEL 9 (Acts 9:32-35)¹ Acts 9:32² Rom. 10:17³ James 1:21

THE RESIDENTS OF JOPPA

~ Model Number Ten, Acts 9:36-42 ~

Joppa is right on the coast near modern Tel Aviv. A church had also obviously been planted in this city. The saints are here called disciples,¹ as they were in Jerusalem and Damascus. In this context, 'disciple' means more than just a learner. These learners had become followers and imitators of their leader.

Because of the raising of Tabitha (Dorcas) from the dead, many believed on the Lord.² To have any sort of consistency this phrase has to be synonymous with 'turned to the Lord'. To believe in the Lord, repent of sin and obey the gospel in baptism must be implied in these phrases, otherwise God IS the author of confusion. Be assured, Peter was faithful to his commission, preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins. After Peter told enquirers on the Day of Pentecost to save themselves (be saved), we read that those who received his word were baptized and added unto them. The Lord only adds to His church those who are being saved.

Heaven and the church's role should be identical.

Discussion Questions

1. Do the inspired writers of the New Testament use the word 'disciple' commonly, and what does it say about followers of Christ?
2. In the context of the book of Acts, what does the phrase 'believed on the Lord' indicate?
3. Was Peter always consistent and faithful to his commission, no matter what the circumstance may have been?

MODEL 10 (Acts 9:38-42)¹ Acts 9:38² Acts 9:42

THE ROMAN CENTURIAN

~PHILANTHROPIST - ARMY OFFICER - MORALIST AND RELIGIONIST~

~ Model Number Eleven, Acts 10:1-48; 11:1-18 ~

Cornelius was converted while on overseas duty. He is portrayed as one of the most upright and religious men of New Testament days, yet he was not saved. He was instructed to send for Peter who would tell him W-O-R-D-S by which he and his household might be saved.¹

The record tells us that he was devout, God-fearing, a generous giver to the underprivileged, a man who engaged in fasting and prayed constantly. God takes notice of such people, and is obviously impressed. So much so, that, in this case, God sent an angel to tell him how to find out what he must do to be saved.²

Peter came to him and preached concerning the Lordship of Christ, His death and resurrection.³ He told Cornelius and his household about Christ's commission to preach and baptize the lost, and that through His name all who believe will receive remission of sins:⁴ commanding them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.⁵

As these were the first truly gentile converts, God sent a manifestation of the Holy Spirit (as He did some eight years previously on the Day of Pentecost), which fell upon them, as Peter commenced his message. This outward manifestation convinced the Jewish Christians that salvation was also for the Gentiles, and that the Holy Spirit might be receive, the same way He was given to the Jews. We note that it was God who granted them repentance to life.⁶ Without the Father's initiative in moving toward man, and drawing men to Christ,⁷ no one can be saved.

Discussion Questions

1. *Is anyone who fears God and works righteousness accepted by God? What does this mean, see Acts 10:35?*
2. *Will all religious, good living, kind, and generous people be saved?
What do we see in this case that is essential before anyone can be saved, see Acts 11:14?
Is speaking in tongues a sign that one has received the gift of the Holy Spirit promised to those who repent and are baptised?*
5. *Did the experience of speaking in tongues excuse these people from obeying the command to be baptized?*
6. *What was the purpose of the Holy Spirit falling upon them?*

MODEL 11 (Acts 10:1-6, 31, 43, 47, 48; 11:14-15)¹ Acts 11:14² Acts 10:6³ Acts 10:40-42⁴ Acts 10:43⁵ Acts 10:48⁶ Acts 11:18⁷ John 6:44

THE HELLENISTS FROM ANTIOCH

~ Model Number Twelve, Acts 11:19-24 ~

Converts from the Mediterranean islands of Crete and Cyprus go out on missionary trip to Syria and plant the church in Antioch. They preached the word¹ – the primary task of all missionaries. The Hand of the Lord was on the missionary/evangelists and the grace of God enabled a great many people to be added to the Lord – to the Lamb's book of life - heaven's role. We read that they believed and turned to the Lord.² This is consistent with earlier models of conversion. Turning to the Lord involves repentance and baptism. Believing involves trusting in the Saviour with all the heart and confessing with the mouth that Jesus is Lord.³ On the day of Pentecost, the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. And those being saved were those who received their (the apostles) word and were baptized.

The mother church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to encourage these new converts to continue in the Lord.⁴

Once we enter the covenant with the Lord we must continue faithful to that covenant, even unto the end, despite what may befall any one of us. Antioch was also the place where followers of Christ were first called Christians.⁵

Discussion Questions

Why do we say that the primary task of all missionaries is to preach the word?

In the context of the book of Acts, what does the description 'added to the Lord' indicate?

Is it necessary for the church to provide teachers to encourage new disciples, and if so, why?

4. *Why are followers of Christ called 'Christians', and does this designation have the same meaning today as it had in the days of the apostles?*

MODEL 12 (Acts 11:19-24)¹ Acts 11:19-20² Acts 11:21³ Rom. 10:9,10⁴ Acts 11:23

⁵ Acts 11:26

THE INTELLIGENT CITY OFFICIAL

~ Model Number Thirteen, Acts 13:4-12 ~

Paul, Barnabas and Mark evangelize the island of Cyprus. Sergius Paulus seeks salvation. Elymas opposes and endeavours to pervert the straight ways of the Lord.¹ Opposition has to be dealt with. We must contend

earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.² On his first visit to Jerusalem, after his conversion, Paul spoke boldly and had to refute the Hellenists.³

Paul later wrote to young Timothy that men will not endure sound doctrine but they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables.⁴ He also warned the elders of Ephesus that from among themselves men would rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after themselves.⁵

Now take an honest look around at all the cults, denominations and confusion in christendom, and see if these words of Paul have NOT come to pass in our day!

The proconsul believed and was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. When a person sees the straight truth he begins to sing ‘Amazing grace that saved a wretch like me’. When preaching these model cases of conversion in denominational and interdenominational circles, highly theologically trained and degreed people have later testified that they have never heard this preached before. They are amazed at the uncorrupted teaching on salvation as presented in the book of Acts.

Discussion Questions

When there is opposition to the gospel, should preachers decline to debate the truth?

Are we to expect the enemy to attack only from outside the church?

What do we see in christendom today, and should we participate in all ecumenical efforts? Should we embrace all or withdraw from some?

MODEL 13 (Acts 13:6-12)¹ Acts 13:8-9² Jude 3³ Acts 9:29⁴ 2Tim. 4:3-4⁵ Acts 20:29-30

THE APPOINTED GENTILES

~ Model Number Fourteen, Acts 13:36-49 ~

Paul, firstly, addresses his remarks to those of Antioch Pisidia who fear God. After relating the facts of the gospel, he concludes his message by proclaiming forgiveness of sins and justification through faith in Christ Jesus whom God raised up from the dead.¹

The Gentiles were hungry for the Word of God and begged for more preaching. ‘Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. And how shall they hear without a preacher?’²

Those who were persuaded (to believe and obey) were encouraged to continue in the grace of God, without which not a single soul can be saved. We are all dependant on that marvelous grace which provides the one and only acceptable sacrifice – God’s precious Son to atone for our sin.

We now read, ‘that as many as were appointed to eternal life believed’.³ Has God created some for heaven and sentenced others to eternal damnation in hell, regardless of the individual? The Jews had just rejected the Word of God and judged themselves unworthy of eternal life.⁴ Those who received the Word, and were obviously baptized, appointed or judged themselves worthy of eternal life. These are the ones who believed, and called on the name of the Lord.

This case is similar to what we read in the gospels, “...even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God not having been baptized with the baptism of John.”⁵ When Jesus came to John to be baptized He told John that it was necessary to fulfill all righteousness. By refusing baptism, we refuse Christ’s righteousness, since we put on Christ in baptism.

Discussion Questions

Why is man totally dependent on the grace of God for his salvation?

2. Is this a case of God over-ruling man’s free will?

3. How does man judge himself worthy or unworthy of eternal life?

What does it mean to justify God, and how can we justify God today?

MODEL 14 (Acts 13:14-16, 38, 39, 43-48)¹ Acts 13:38-39² Rom. 10:14³ Acts 13:48⁴ Acts 13:46⁵ Luke 7:29-30

MULTITUDES OF JEWS AND GREEKS

~ Model Number Fifteen, Acts 14:1-6 ~

While Paul preached boldly in the Lord at Iconium, and a great multitude believed, yet unbelieving Jews poisoned the minds of many. Paul later asked the question, “Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?”¹ Writing to these same Galatians, he further asks, “Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”² No doubt it was by believing the promise of God which Paul proclaim.

When a person hears and believes the promise of God, that the gift of His Spirit is to those who repent and submit to baptism, they immediately obey what God requires. Paul also wrote, out of great concern, “But I fear...your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity of the gospel. There were those who preached another Jesus, received a different spirit, and a different gospel.”³

The way of salvation is not difficult to understand, nor has God made it confusing. The way is very simple, if we just take all what the Bible says, and obey from our hearts that precise form of doctrine delivered us⁴ by the apostles.

Discussion Questions

1. How and by whom are followers of Christ bewitched today?

Which Bible verses tell us about the promise of the Spirit?

What constitutes another Jesus, a different spirit, and another gospel?

MODEL 15 (Acts 14:1-4)¹ Gal. 3:1² Gal. 3:2³ 2Cor. 11:3-4⁴ Rom. 6:17

THE CITIZENS OF DERBE

~ Model Number Sixteen, Acts 14:20-22 ~

Paul preached the gospel and made many disciples in Derbe. We might well ask, once again, how does one make disciples? Remember the commission given by our Lord? He said “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”¹ According to Luke, making disciples is accomplished by preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins. Preaching the gospel precedes baptism. ‘Teaching all things’ follows baptism.

Our Lord stated while on earth, “If anyone loves Me, He will keep My word.”² And again, “You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you.”³ Only those who follow Christ and observe all His commandments are His true disciples. All others are merely professors, not possessors of, or participants in, eternal life. Those who keep His commandments know that they have eternal life.⁴

It was in Derbe that Paul led Timothy and his mother Eunice to the Lord - and most likely his grandmother Lois, and possibly his Greek father. Years later Paul writes of the genuine faith of this family as being still fresh in his memory. From childhood, Timothy had known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make one wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.⁵

In their case we see how valuable it is to have a Bible-based background. True genuine faith is based on Bible knowledge. First, a knowledge of the law, which makes us aware of sin and then directs us to seek deliverance in Christ. And secondly, a knowledge of its prophecies that lead one to believe that Jesus is the Messiah and Lord of glory. This is genuine faith, trusting in His righteousness and precious blood, alone, to atone for sin.

Such faith will demonstrate itself in a public confession upon which an individual can, and should, be baptized into Christ without delay.

Discussion Questions

1. How do we make disciples TODAY?

Can we honestly say that we love Christ and are His friends while we refuse to obey the gospel in repentance and baptism?

What advantage is there in growing up in a home where the Word of God is read and taught?

MODEL 16 (Acts 14:20-23)¹ Matt. 28:19-20² John 14:23³ John 15:14⁴ 1John 5:2,13⁵ 2Tim. 3:15

THE BUSINESS WOMAN FROM ASIA

~ Model Number Seventeen, Acts 16:11-15~

Lydia was one of those God-fearing, devout women of her day. She worshipped God, and was attending a prayer meeting when she heard Paul preach. The Lord opened her heart.¹ Why hers and not others? Since the Lord looks on the heart, He obviously saw in Lydia a contrite and respectful spirit of obedient love. Isaiah wrote long ago, “But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.”²

Lydia and her household were baptized. No doubt a public confession of their faith in Christ indicated that they were willing and proper candidates for baptism. Along with repentance, no more and no less was required by the apostles of those wanting to obey the gospel and be saved. Her household probably consisted of her servants and those associated in her business, since her home was across the Aegean sea in Asia Minor. Following Lydia’s conversion, she offered hospitality to God’s servants. Jesus said, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another.”³ John later wrote to the church concerning traveling preachers, “We ought to receive such because they go forth in Christ’s name taking nothing from the Gentiles.”⁴ Paul wrote for us to be ‘given to hospitality’.⁵ And Peter wrote, “Be hospitable to one another without grudging.”⁶ Hospitality is the badge of a true disciple of Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. Can anyone be saved if God does not open his or her heart, and does God open any kind of heart?

Are infants and little children included in the term ‘household’, and if not, why not?

Hospitality is the practical side of what essential Christian quality?

MODEL 17 (Acts 16:13-15)¹ Acts 16:14² Isa. 66:2³ John 13:35⁴ 3John 7, 8⁵ Rom. 12:13⁶ 1Peter 4:8-9

THE PHILIPPIAN JAILOR

~ Model Number Eighteen, Acts 16:25-34 ~

Who does not know the story of the midnight conversion of the Philippian jailor? When all others would be complaining of injustice, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. Amazingly, following the earthquake, not one prisoner left this heart-stopping, awe-inspiring scene. The jailor called out, "What must I do to be saved?"¹ Obviously, there is nothing sinful man can do, to procure his salvation – it is a gift. Not by works lest any man should boast.² Salvation is not by works of righteousness, but according to God's mercy. It is by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit³ – born anew - from above – of water and the Spirit.⁴ If it is of works it is no longer grace.

However, this does NOT mean that man does nothing in response to God's love gift. When the Jews asked Jesus what they should do He replied, "This is the work of God that you believe on Him whom He has sent."⁵ Paul wrote that it is by faith working through love.⁶ James wrote that a man is justified by works and not by faith only.⁷ If we simply believe in God we are no better off than the demons.⁸ Abraham is given as an illustration, and we are told that Abraham, by faith, obeyed.⁹ Baptism, repentance, and confession, are not works of the flesh, but are acts of faith.

After Paul told the jailor that salvation was based on faith, he spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house. As they listened they believed and received that engrafted word which is able to save our souls. Because their heart was changed their conduct was changed and they were baptized the same hour of the night.¹⁰ God changed their state bringing them from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light – the kingdom of His dear Son. The Lord then added them to His church.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it impossible for man to save himself?

Is it right to tell enquiring sinners that there is nothing for them to do in order to be saved?

Why is baptism NOT a work of the law, or a work of righteousness, or a work of the flesh, but IS a work

of faith, the same as repentance and confession of faith?

4. Is it right to delay anyone's baptism for any reason?

MODEL 18 (Acts 16:25-34)¹ Acts 16:30² Eph. 2:8-9³ Titus 3:5⁴ John 3:5⁵ John 6:29⁶ Gal. 5:6⁷ James 2:24⁸ James 2:17-26⁹ Heb. 11:8, 17¹⁰ Acts 16:33

THE DEVOTE GREEKS AND LEADING WOMEN OF ATHENS

~ Model Number Nineteen, Acts 17:1-4 ~

In Thessalonica Paul once again demonstrated how that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ prophesied in the Scriptures. Someone has said that the theme of the New Testament is JESUS, and the theme of the Old Testament is CHRIST, and the theme of the whole bible is that Jesus of the New is the Christ of the Old. Several times we read of Paul persuading listeners by reasoning and explaining the Scriptures. Isaiah cried long ago, "Come now let us reason (not emote) together says the Lord."¹ Emotion has its place but all true conversions are based upon an intelligent acknowledgment - a publicly expressed confession with the mouth - that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God.

A multitude joined Paul and Silas. From previous models, we know that God adds those being saved to His church. They are the ones who gladly receive the word of the gospel and are baptized. You cannot join the Lord's church like you join a club, a cult or a denomination. God only adds those who are being saved to His church.

Discussion Questions

- 1. What role does reason play in a person's conversion?*
- 2. In what way are emotions involved in a person's conversion?*
- 3. What part does persuasion have in one's conversion?*

How is one joined to God's people?

MODEL 19 (Acts 17:1-4)¹ Isa. 1:18-19

THE FAIR-MINDED BEREANS

~ Model Number Twenty, Acts 17:10-12 ~

Today, religious people can be divided into two groups: those who are dyed in the wool, bigoted and blinded by their denominational traditions; and those who with an open mind are willing to compare what is being

taught with what the Scriptures declare. This was true in Berea where they searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether the things Paul preached were true.¹

By now any open-minded reader can see that the term 'believed', in this context, involves a complete trust in the fact that Jesus is the Christ, that He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification according to the Scriptures. And that this belief with the mind must also involve ALL one's heart – a total unconditional surrender to Christ as Lord and master of one's life. The wrath of God will come upon all those who do not obey the gospel.² In fact it now rests upon them in this life regardless of their religious affiliation, church practices, feelings, and/or good works.³

Discussion Questions

1. *What role does 'searching the Scriptures' have in one's conversion?*

2. *With what shall one believe?*

Why does the wrath of God now rest on good people who may even be religious and charitable?

MODEL 20 (Acts 17:10-12)¹ Acts 17:11² 2Thess. 1:8-9³ John 3:18, 36

Dionysius, DAMARIS, and others

~ Model Number Twenty-one, Acts 17:17,24-34 ~

Again, we see Paul reasoning not only in the religious center with worshippers, but also in the market place with non-churchgoers. He concludes his message on Mars Hill (with the thinkers of the day) with these words, "Now God commands ALL men everywhere to repent."¹ The Areopagite and others includes everyone. 'And others' can include both you and me. Both the up-and-outs and the down-and-outs; both the religious and non-religious; both East and West, can come to Christ for salvation.

What is true for the Jew is also true for the non-Jew – ALL must repent. Initially this involves a change in thinking and direction followed by a change of conduct. It is not just being sorry, nor just a change of character and habits, it is turning from serving self-interests to serving God.² Mistakes will be made after conversion but these can then be confessed and cleansed in the blood of Christ. Such means of cleansing is not available to the person who has not first been converted. It is only as we walk in the light that we have fellowship with God's Son and each other.

In this case, conversion is summed up in the words 'joined him' and 'believed'. These terms are just that, summaries of a sinner's response to the gospel. They do not exclude obedience by repentance and baptism, or a public confession of faith in Christ. In fact, these responses must be included if God is to be consistent and NOT the author of confusion. Nor can we substitute the traditions of men to replace what God has ordained.

Discussion Questions

While very commendable, is a reformation of bad habits equivalent with bible conversion?

Can a professing Christian have fellowship with God, and God's people, while continuing to live in sin,

see 1 John 1:3-7; 3:1-9?

3. *What significance is there in the phrase 'joined him'?*

MODEL 21 (Acts 17:17, 30-34)¹ Acts 17:30-31² 1Thess. 1:9

THE SYNAGOGUE RULER AND HIS NEIGHBOUR

~ Model Number Twenty-two, Acts 18:1-8 ~

In the religious center of the day, Paul reasoned and persuaded both Jews and non-Jews, as he testified to the fact that Jesus was the Christ.¹ Same message, same method and same response, only different people.

Crispus was the ruler of the Synagogue and Justus lived next door. Then there were Gaius and Stephanus, and his household,² who were also baptized by the hand of Paul.

What is different is the circumstance under which each came to a spiritual awakening. These encounters are sometimes confused with conversion. The gospel does not change. However, demons using men, pervert it. It is possible that Justus was already a follower of Christ and had been witnessing to his neighbour – an effective means of leading people to Christ and salvation.

The inspired historian sums up the results of this evangelistic campaign with these words "And many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptised."³ As we have been saying all along: joining the fellowship of God's people; being added to the church; becoming believers; gladly receiving the word of the gospel; obedient to the faith; turning to the Lord, are all similar descriptions summarising bible conversion. This present summary must also imply repentance and confession.

You may have been taught that you are saved, or you may feel saved, without making the same response to the gospel, but remember, we will all be judged by the same words of Christ, spoken by our Lord and His apostles. Without making the same response as those who heard the apostles we have no God-given assurance

of salvation nor any gift of the Holy Spirit. One may be called Christian but be just as lost as the idolater and adulterer; the drunkard and the sorcerer; the liar and the murderer; the coward and sexually immoral.

Discussion Questions

If Christ did NOT send Paul to baptize, but to preach the gospel, why did Paul baptize these people named in the text, and why is it stated that many of the Corinthians were baptized, see 1 Cor.1:17;

John. 4:1,2?

- 2. Does Luke use different expressions in the book of Acts to describe true bible conversion? If so, why? Could any evangelistic campaign, claiming to have bible conversions, be truly biblical if it could not be said, 'That many citizens hearing, believed and were baptized'?*

By what standard will all be judged?

MODEL 22 (Acts 18:4-11) ¹ Acts 18:4-5 ² Acts 18:8

THE TWELVE MEN RE-BAPTISED

~ Model Number Twenty-three, Acts 18:24-19:5 ~

Apollos was an outstanding preacher: eloquent, mighty in the Scriptures, fervent in spirit and an accurate teacher concerning the things of the Lord¹ - as far as he had been taught. He reminds me of many great preachers from history and from our own generation. Like many of these, Apollos was teaching baptism incorrectly. It was, through a humble Christian couple, that he was taught the way of the Lord more accurately.²

When Paul arrived in Ephesus he asked the twelve disciples of Apollos if they had received the Holy Spirit. They replied that they had never heard of Him. Paul then asks the obvious question, "Unto what then were you baptized?"³ Paul knew that if they had been baptized correctly they would know about the Holy Spirit and they would have received the gift promised to those who repent and are baptized – when baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The twelve men were then re-immersed in the name - with the authority - of the Lord Jesus. Everyone who has not been baptized according to the teaching of the gospel of Christ, should be re-baptised, that is, baptised correctly. The one and only Biblical baptism is the immersion in water of a sinner, who, hearing the preaching of the gospel has believed, repented and made a confession of faith in Christ. This is a baptism for the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, in the name of the Lord Jesus, who said, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

And, "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved."⁴

Discussion Questions

- 1. Could any preacher who is well versed in Scripture, capable of holding an audience spellbound by his eloquence and enthusiasm, possibly be wrong on the question of baptism?*

- 2. Do people who are baptized incorrectly need to be baptized again - Biblically?*

If receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with baptism, why did Paul ask "Into what then were you baptized?", and why did he take them and baptise them again—correctly?

MODEL 23 (Acts 18:24-19:5) ¹ Acts 18:24-25 ² Acts 18:26 ³ Acts 19:3 ⁴ Mark 16:16

THE DISCIPLES FROM THE SCHOOL OF TYRANNUS

~ Model Number Twenty-four, Acts 19:8-20 ~

For three months, Paul spoke boldly: reasoning and persuading those in attendance at the Synagogue in Ephesus. The term persuaded, of course, means that they were persuaded to believe and obey the gospel. Others were hardened and did not believe. Either one obeys the gospel or one is rebellious to God. The gospel is like the sun, it hardens some and melts others. Those who were hardened were like the Pharisees who rejected the counsel of God not being baptized.

Those who had believed with fear and trembling came and confessed their evil deeds. They burned their God-dishonoring books. All who come to Christ should 'burn all their bridges' that could lead them back into sin and evil ways. One should not become yoked with unbelievers. We should come out of the world and be separate. Friendship with the world is enmity with God. One cannot partake of the Lord's table and the table of demons.

Discussion Questions

- 1. Is there any place in God's church for timid preachers?*

Is emotional preaching, true-to-the-Bible preaching?

- 3. What is the opposite response to that of hearers being hardened by the gospel?*

- 4. How is new life in Christ expressed? By fun-filled frivolity or what?*

MODEL 24 (Acts 19:8-10, 17-20)

THE HOSTS AND HOSTESSES OF MALTA

~ Model Number Twenty-five, Acts 28:1-10 ~

Disciples (converts from the Day of Pentecost from Crete or Rome) could have evangelized this Island long before Paul arrived. Or during Paul's three month stay many could have become followers of Christ. We make this assumption on the basis that this is what usually took place where Paul stayed for any length of time. They also showed by their deeds the fruit of brotherly love.¹

We have said before that hospitality is the badge of a true disciple. These people of Malta had that gift. Paul wrote, "Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches."² A leading citizen entertained Paul and his friends courteously. Others provided such things as were necessary. We read in Third John that early missionary evangelists took nothing from the Gentiles,³ but those who belonged to Christ were urged to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God.⁴

We include the above in our cases of conversion because it demonstrates the fruit of Godly living and brotherly love. God's people see to the practical needs of all those who have been converted, especially teachers and missionaries. Before King Agrippa, Paul testified that he had been sent to declare that people should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.⁵

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it probable that these people on Malta were followers of Christ?
2. How is brotherly love expressed, see 1 John 3:17,18?
3. How is brotherly love different from love?

MODEL 25 (Acts 28:7-10)¹ Acts 28:7, 10² Gal. 6:6³ 3John 7⁴ 3John 6, 8⁵ Acts 26:20

THE PERSUADED ROMANS

~ Model Number Twenty-six, Acts 28:23-31 ~

We read that some were persuaded and some disbelieved. The opposite of 'believes in the Son' is 'disobeys the Son'. One cannot sit on the fence. Either we are for Christ or we are against Him¹.

Again we see Paul explaining and testifying, but there are none so blind as those who do not want to see. Jesus said, "You are not willing to come to Me that you may have life."² Persuading people to believe the facts of the gospel is not so difficult, but it is an entirely different matter to get people to be willing to cut their emotional ties, change their life-style, and obey the gospel.

Jesus also quoted from this same passage in Isaiah chapter six, when explaining why He spoke in parables³. God has bound Himself by promise to save those who, hearing the gospel, open their eyes and believe the fact that Jesus is the Christ. As we have seen over and over again this involves repentance and submission to Biblical baptism. We are buried with Him through baptism.

On this note, of obedience to the gospel,⁴ the inspired historian concludes his record of the ministry of the apostles.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it said that disobedience is opposite to believing?
What is the basic reason why people do not obey the gospel – repent and be baptised?
 3. Why did Jesus speak in parables, and why does God blind the minds of some people? See 2 Thes. 2:9-12.
- MODEL 26 (Acts 28:23-27)¹ Mat.12:30² John 5.40³ Matt. 13:11-15⁴ Rom. 16:26

IN CONCLUSION

One thing missing from these model cases of conversion is the modern-day practice of giving assurance of salvation to seekers who do not comply with God's requirements. Did you notice that no enquirer in the book of Acts was ever told to raise their hand for prayer; or come to the front of a meeting for counseling; or to kneel and ask for God's forgiveness; or ask Jesus to come into their heart; or give their lives to Christ; or pray the sinner's prayer; or learn the catechism; or be christened; or be confirmed?

While some of the above may be helpful in expressing humility, and some may make people think about their relationship with God and even start them seeking, yet none of these requirements have divine sanction, or assurance of salvation, attached to them. They may be a means to an end, but never an end in themselves. As they are generally presented today, they are but mere substitutes for the God-ordained requirements. As such, they can only bring a false sense of security and cause confusion, division, and contradiction to the truth...and end in eternal death.

The question which now remains to be answered is, Have I been saved according to God's revealed will? Or, alternatively, 'Has the Lord added me to His church?' If, through hearing the gospel preached you have become convicted of the sinfulness of your sin, and called out to God to save you from sin's penalty, you now need to put your complete trust in the blood of Christ's sacrifice, repent of your sin and be baptized. Ananias asked Saul the question, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized..."¹ There is no need to hold

back. All are invited to come to Christ, and all are commanded to repent² and be baptised None will be rejected. There is no more convenient time to obey the gospel than right now! Will you be saved, today?
Discussion Questions

*1. Is it necessary to have a biblical example for every thing we do in helping people come to salvation?
Are all spiritual encounters (awakenings) the same as each other?*

Do we need to preach and follow biblical requirements before giving and receiving divine assurance of salvation?

4. Is now the right time: to surrender ones life to Christ as Lord and Master; turn away from serving self to serving God; publicly confess faith in the Son of God; be baptized into Him; and continue faithful until the end?

*IN CONCLUSION*¹ Acts 22:16² Acts 17:30³ Acts 10:48⁴ Heb. 4:7⁵ 2 Cor. 6:2

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK IN A DISCUSSION GROUP

Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance before opening the Bible discussion. Take one model at a time. Be sure to read, preferably from the NKJV or the KJV, the bible passage given after each model number. Follow this by reading the comments. Then discuss the pros and cons of each question referring to the references, the main passage, and any other Bible references that can be found on each particular subject. Finally, close in prayer asking God to remove from the mind all teaching which is contrary to divine truth, but to retain that which is according to His will.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Doug Willis, is an Australian evangelist whose ministry in gospel preaching and teaching has taken him to over forty different nations. His ministry is supported on a faith basis by those interested in the spread of New Testament Christianity. He is free in Christ and teaches out of loyalty to Christ and His word alone, having conducted many seminars for preachers and elders in various countries.

Brother Willis, is also the dean of the Australian branch of Christ's Evangelical Foundation - a bible college by extension - having gained the ABS (Associate degree in Bible Studies) and the BBS (Bachelors degree in Bible Studies) with highest honours. "Let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me,"

Jer. 9:24. This book is sent forth with the prayer that souls may be saved for God's eternal glory.

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