

CONVERSION STUDIES

CONVERSION OF A RELIGIOUS MAN

Example five of thirteen

In studying the book of Acts we can be thoroughly taught concerning conversion to Christ. In spite of the great emphasis on conversion, there are many who are misinformed concerning it. Thus the value of these studies in Acts. Let us define conversion. It is the process of changing an individual, morally and spiritually, by turning him from his sins unto the God of heaven and His will. Let us now study another example from Acts.

We see a very competent man, the treasurer of Ethiopia. "Behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship" (Acts 8:27). His position was exalted and very prominent in society. He did not let his business interfere with his worshiping. He was truly a religious man. He had traveled from Ethiopia even though he was not allowed full participation in worshiping because he was a eunuch. This gives us some idea of the hunger for God that was in his soul. Despite his admirable attributes, he was a religious sinner.

He was very religious. He was reading the Bible and wanted help in his study. Yet he needed Christ or all these events would not have taken place. "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Since the man was religious, his need was for a change in religion. If not, why did God send Philip to him? Here is one point upon which so many people stumble. They cannot see why it is necessary for anyone (especially themselves) to change religion. From this example we can learn some principles that will help us to see the need for some religious people to change. He recognized a need for help in understanding Isaiah. Before long he recognized a greater need. As his understanding grew, he recognized his need to change. The question is, "Why did the eunuch need to change his religion?"

He had been worshiping according to the Old Testament which was no longer God's law (Col. 2:14). With the changing of the law, God's method of pardon had been changed.

The eunuch could not have redemption by the law of Moses. He needed Christ. "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). The will of Christ was not available under the system by which he was worshiping. People today have the same needs, but many are religiously walking where they cannot receive it. There are many religious sinners who need to change religion.

We must walk in the truth of Christ. "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son" (II John 9). Those who are following the religious errors of men may be believers in Christ as he was a believer in God, but they need to be brought into harmony with the will of Christ. The eunuch demonstrates the need of every religious person who is not walking in the truth. They need to change to the pure religion of Christ.

The plan of salvation for the eunuch is the same as that of all others converted. The same must be followed today as God has given no indication of any other. The beginning point in all conversions is someone proclaiming Christ's truth. The eunuch had to hear the word for "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). He heard it (Acts 8:32-35). A good text and an eager listener is all that it takes to make a great teaching situation. Philip had both. The eunuch did not have to know what all the religions of the world taught, nor was he interested in what other people thought. He needed to know what Christ wills. It is significant that God did not tell him directly. God uses men to convey it to others. This is always the pattern. There are no exceptions. Upon hearing the word, the eunuch believed (Acts 8:37). He had an open and receptive mind. When one really believes in Christ, and is interested in salvation above everything else, other things do not interfere.

Without hesitation, the eunuch was baptized (Acts 8:38,39). To some this may seem strange because some popular religious teachers never mention baptism, and their followers all but sneer at it. The account says Philip "preached unto him Jesus. And

as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:35,36). Where did the eunuch learn of baptism? Philip preached Jesus and the eunuch desired baptism. Where did the eunuch learn of baptism if Philip preached Jesus? Preaching Jesus must include preaching about baptism. If Philip didn't teach about baptism in preaching Christ, how did the eunuch know about it? Those today who claim to preach Christ but omit reference to baptism preach a mutilated gospel. What did Jesus say? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16: 16). Although Luke does not mention repentance, we know the eunuch repented. His whole conduct changed. Furthermore, repentance is a part of preaching Christ (Luke 24:47).

It is impossible to frame a sentence that will more clearly teach us about baptism. Neither Philip nor the eunuch would have needed to go into the water if sprinkling had been the mode of baptism. The things that make it necessary for those who practice immersion to go into the water today made it necessary for Philip and the eunuch to go into the water then. An investigation of Acts will show that this conversion agrees with all others (Acts 18:8). When all examples are studied, we find that conversion requires hearing the gospel, believing in Christ, repenting of sins, and being baptized into Christ. All these the eunuch did. Will you?

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