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## Conversion from Sin

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Instructions:

**Please take all courses in order as listed on our home page (the computer will ask!). If you have not done all the lessons of previous courses, please [click here to go to the beginning](#).**

If you have not already done so, save this lesson to your computer using the "save" feature of your browser or PDF reader. Then print out the lesson (or at least open it in your browser or PDF reader **offline** – not on the Internet). Read the lesson and **study in your Bible the passages indicated >>> Scripture <<<**. Following each passage, study each question that has a number enclosed in asterisks (\*1\*, \*2\*, etc.), and **write down your answers on paper**. Some questions include more than one number because they have more than one blank to fill in. ("Think" questions should be carefully considered for your own benefit, but your answers will not be submitted to us.) Please take your time, study each passage carefully, answer the questions honestly, and consider the applications to your own life (John 12:48; 2 Tim. 2:15).

When you have studied the whole lesson and written down answers to all the indicated questions, return to the menu for this course on our web site at [www.BibleStudyLessons.com](http://www.BibleStudyLessons.com) and click on the link for the **answer quiz** for this lesson (or simply click on the link at the end of this lesson). Follow the directions to submit your answers and receive your grade. You will then be given an opportunity to see the correct answers to the questions. Please save this lesson and the correct answers for future reference.

Then move on to the next lesson or the next course in order. **Please study all lessons in all courses in order as listed in the menus on our web site.**

Thank you for your interest, and God bless your study of His word.

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## Conversion from Sin

### Lesson #5: The Church, Motives, and Accountability

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#### I. The Church in Conversion

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The church is a common topic in the New Testament. Jesus promised He would build it (Matt. 16:18). All New Testament Christians were added to it when they received forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:47). Let us consider the role of the church in the conversion of sinners.

#### A. Terms for the Church

Jesus' church is referred to by various different terms in the New Testament. Familiarity with these terms will help us recognize the church when it is discussed in the passages we study. So consider the following terms used to refer to the church:

>>> Please read Ephesians 1:22,23. <<<

\*1\* What is the relationship between Christ and the church? Answer: Christ is the Head of the church, which is His \_\_\_\_\_.

The church is the body of Christ in that He serves as the Head or Ruler over it. [Colossians 1:18]

**>>> Please read Matthew 16:18,19. <<<**

\*2\* What did Jesus promise to build? Answer: He said he would build His \_\_\_\_\_.

\*3\* What did He promise to give to Peter? Answer: He said He would give him the keys of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus here uses the terms "church" and "kingdom" interchangeably. The passage makes no sense at all unless these terms refer to the same body or group of people.

**>>> Please read Colossians 1:12–14. <<<**

\*4\* What does God put us into when we are delivered from the power of darkness? Answer: We are translated or transferred into the \_\_\_\_\_ of His Son.

The kingdom is not an institution that will come in the future but does not now exist. Rather, all saved people have been in the kingdom from the first century onward. Note that this kingdom is referred to again in this context as the church or body over which Christ is the Head (v18). The church is Christ's kingdom because it includes all the people who have pledged allegiance to Him as their King or ruler.

**>>> Please read 1 Timothy 3:15. <<<**

\*5\* What did Paul call the church in this verse? Answer: He referred to the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, which is the church of the living God.

The church is the house (household) of God in the sense that it is His family over which He presides as our spiritual Father (Eph. 2:19).

So the church is the body of Christ, the kingdom of Christ, and the house of God. The church is also called by other terms, such as the temple of God (Eph. 2:19–22). These are not different institutions or groups; rather they are simply different terms that refer to the same group but emphasize different aspects of it.

Notice passages using these terms as we continue our study.

## **B. The Importance of the Church in Conversion**

Some people teach that church membership is irrelevant to conversion: one can be saved in or out of the church. But notice what God's word actually says about the church in salvation from sin.

**>>> Please read Acts 20:28. <<<**

\*6\* What price did Jesus pay to purchase the church? Answer: He purchased the church with His \_\_\_\_\_.

We are forgiven of sins by the blood of Jesus (Eph. 1:7). But His blood purchased the church. So how could we be saved outside the church?

>>> Please read Ephesians 5:23,25. <<<

\*7\* Christ is the Savior of what? Answer: He is the Savior of the \_\_\_\_\_; He gave Himself for the church.

Since Jesus is the only Savior and He gave Himself to save the church (His body), how can we be saved outside the church?

>>> Please read 1 Corinthians 12:13. <<<

\*8\* How do we enter the one body? Answer: We are all \_\_\_\_\_ into one body.

We learned earlier that baptism is necessary for us to be cleansed or saved from sin, so we come into Christ at the point of baptism. But here we learn that baptism also puts us into the one body, which is the church. ("By one Spirit" here refers to the fact that the word revealed by the Holy Spirit teaches us to be baptized. Cf. Ephesians 5:26; John 3:5.)

The church itself does not save us. But when our sins are forgiven by the blood of Jesus, He puts us into the church (Acts 2:47). There church, therefore, is the body or group that consists of all people who have received remission of sins. How then can we be saved if we are outside that body?

The church is not insignificant or unimportant in God's eternal plan for our redemption from sin. Rather it was part of that plan from eternity (Ephesians 3:10,11). Since all saved people will be added to Jesus' church (the kingdom), they need to be taught about the church even before they are baptized (Acts 8:12; 19:8; 28:23,31; Matt. 4:23).

**For further information about the importance of the church, please see the links at the end of this lesson.**

### **C. The Number of True Churches**

We have seen that membership in Jesus' church is essential to salvation. But many different denominations exist today. Some people claim that it does not matter which church one joins. Others celebrate the existence of denominations as an advantage or even a blessing. Consider what the Bible teaches:

***How many true churches are there?***

>>> Please read Matthew 16:18.

\*9\* What prediction did Jesus make? Answer: He said He would \_\_\_\_\_ His church.

\*10\* How many churches would then belong to Him? (a) none, (b) many different churches, (c) one ("my church"). Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus promised to build one church that would belong to Him. It is His because He bought it with His blood (Acts 20:28). When people claim that many different churches belong to Him, they contradict His intentions regarding His church and regarding His blood. Since it is His church, bought by His blood, what right does any man have to change His will regarding it?

>>> Please read Ephesians 1:22,23. <<<

\*11\* What is Jesus' relationship to the church? Answer: He is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church, which is His body.

How many bodies does the Head have?

**>>> Please read Ephesians 5:23,25. <<<**

\*12\* The relationship of the church to Jesus is compared to what? Answer: It is compared to the headship of a man over his \_\_\_\_\_.

How many wives is a man permitted by God to be head over?

**>>> Please read Ephesians 4:3–6. <<<**

\*13\* Unity requires the seven things that are listed here. How many of each should there be? Answer: There is (give a number) \_\_\_\_\_ of each.

In particular, note that there is one "body," just as surely as there is one God and Father. But the body is the church (1:22,23).

**>>> Please read 1 Corinthians 12:20. <<<**

\*14\* The Lord's church consists of how many bodies? Answer: There are many members but \_\_\_\_\_ body.

Jesus built, bought, and died for just one church. He adds all saved people to that one church (Acts 2:47). People who are not in that one church, therefore, are not among the saved. Whenever any church claims that God's true people can be saved in any of several or many different bodies, that church proves that is it not Jesus' church!

### ***Is religious division acceptable?***

Different denominations contradict one another in their teaching and practice about worship, organization, salvation, and work. What does the Bible teach about such disagreements?

We have already learned that we must follow God's plan for our service to Him without human changes. Denominational differences are wrong, first of all, because they result from human changes in God's plan.

We also studied Ephesians 4:3–6 which taught the need for unity, including one body and one faith. The different denominations are surely not united and do not all practice the one true faith of the gospel.

**>>> Please read John 17:20–22. <<<**

\*15,16\* For what did Jesus pray? Answer: He prayed for all His disciples to be \_\_\_\_\_ as He and the \_\_\_\_\_ are one.

Religious division violates the prayer of Jesus.

**>>> Please read 1 Corinthians 1:10–13. <<<**

\*17,18\* What instruction did Paul give the church in Corinth? Answer: He said there should be no \_\_\_\_\_ among them. To prove the point He asked, "Is Christ \_\_\_\_\_?"

If Jesus' teaching contradicted itself, we would expect people who followed Him to contradict one another. But He is not divided against Himself, so Paul taught Jesus' followers there should be no divisions among them.

**>>> Please read 1 Corinthians 14:33. <<<**

\*19\* God is not the author or source of what? Answer: He is not the author (God) of \_\_\_\_\_.

The contradictory doctrines of denominationalism are unquestionably confusing, so we can be sure that such division is not from God.

**>>> Please read Mark 3:24,25. <<<**

\*20\* What did Jesus say about a kingdom or house that is divided against itself? Answer: It cannot \_\_\_\_\_.

It follows from the Scriptures that there can be only one true church and all truly converted people are added by the Lord to it. If any religious group excuses or defends the existence of contradictory denominations, we can be sure that church is not the one true church nor is it any part of it. Jesus' true church is not a denomination nor is it part of any conglomerate or confederacy of denominations.

Each person who seeks to be saved, must be part of the church that Jesus built and died for.

**For further information about denominations and how many acceptable churches there are, please see the links at the end of this lesson.**

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## II. Motives and Accountability

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We have examined the Bible teaching about how and why people need conversion. We have also studied the need for faithful living, which includes membership in Jesus' one true church. Each person must make the decision for himself whether or not to accept God's will and be converted. Note some points that should be considered in making this decision.

### A. The Importance of Proper Motives

The Bible teaches the importance, not just of obeying God, but of doing so for the proper reasons and with proper attitudes. This is important both in meeting the conditions of conversion and in living by God's teaching after conversion.

**>>> Please read Proverbs 4:23. <<<**

\*21\* Why is the condition of ones heart important? Answer: Out of the heart spring (are, flow) the \_\_\_\_\_.

The heart is where we decide what we will do. It is the seat of our choices. Attitudes are important because they ultimately determine how we act and what kind of person we are.

**>>> Please read 1 Chronicles 28:9. <<<**

\*22,23\* What attitude did David teach Solomon to have in serving God? Answer: He said to serve Him with a \_\_\_\_\_ heart (devotion) and a \_\_\_\_\_ mind.

David warned that God searches and understands the thoughts and intents of our heart. He does not want just outward motions. He wants sincere meaning and understanding.

**>>> Please read Matthew 5:8. <<<**

\*24 What is God's reward for the pure in heart? Answer: The pure in heart are blessed because they will \_\_\_\_\_.

Note that the condition of ones heart is essential to receiving eternal life with God.

**>>> Please read Romans 6:17,18. <<<**

\*25 What role does the heart play in obedience? Answer: People who want to be set free from sin, must obey from the \_\_\_\_\_ the teaching delivered from God.

We cannot truly be converted by just going through the motions. We must understand and mean from the heart what we do in our obedience to the gospel.

**>>> Please read Romans 12:1,2. <<<**

\*26 Instead of conforming to the world, what should you do? Answer: You should be transformed by \_\_\_\_\_.

Changing our lives begins by changing how we think. Outward change must come from within, and that requires proper attitudes.

**>>> Please read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. <<<**

\*27 What quality is needed to make our works of service acceptable? Answer: No matter what good we do, it profits nothing if we do not also have \_\_\_\_\_.

**>>> Please read 1 Corinthians 14:15. <<<**

\*28 How should we offer our prayers and singing? Answer: We must sing and pray with the spirit and the \_\_\_\_\_.

God does not accept mere outward ritual unaccompanied by sincere understanding and meaning in the heart.

Proper motives and attitudes are essential in all our service to God. In particular, we must understand the proper purpose and sincerely mean what we do in meeting the conditions of forgiveness. Then we must serve God faithfully with proper motives.

## **B. The Condition of Those Who Are Not Accountable**

It should be obvious that little children cannot make the commitment that serving God requires. They cannot hear, understand, and believe the gospel. They cannot truly repent, confess Christ, and understand the purpose of baptism. They cannot live the faithful life that God requires after baptism, and they surely cannot do these things with a true understanding of the meaning and purpose of what

they involve.

So the command to be converted is not addressed to little children. They cannot obey with understanding; therefore, obedience is not required of them. What then is their status before God?

**>>> Please read Matthew 18:2,3. <<<**

\*29\* What must we do in order to enter the kingdom of heaven? Answer: We must be converted and become like \_\_\_\_\_.

When sinners are converted, they become like little children. It follows that little children do not need conversion. They are innocent and acceptable to God just as they are without being converted.

**>>> Please read Matthew 19:13,14. <<<**

\*30\* What did Jesus say about the little children that were brought to Him? Answer: He said that of (to) such is the \_\_\_\_\_.

If the kingdom of heaven consists of those who are like little children, then children must not be counted guilty of sin. Note that Jesus did not require these children to be converted or be baptized. They were acceptable just as they were.

**>>> Please read Psalms 106:37,38. <<<**

\*31\* When idol worshipers sacrificed their children to idols, what kind of blood did they shed? Answer: They shed \_\_\_\_\_ blood.

So God counts little children to be innocent. We already studied that they do not inherit the guilt of sin from Adam or from their ancestors. God does not hold them accountable for their conduct until they are mature enough to be capable of obeying the gospel with understanding of what is involved.

As children grow, they should be taught God's word to the extent they are able to understand it, so they will gradually grow in understanding as they are able. When they become capable of obeying God's will with understanding, God holds them accountable. They will eventually sin, as all do. Then the Bible teachings about conversion will apply to them.

**For further information about the innocence or guilt of little children, please see the links at the end of this lesson.**

### **Personal application questions:**

Do you believe the existence of many different denominations pleases God or displeases Him? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

Have you found the one true church that belongs to Jesus? If so, have you become part of it? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you believe babies are innocent or guilty before God? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

If you have once professed to be converted, did you sincerely understand and mean the commitment? \_\_\_\_\_

When you have carefully studied this lesson and written down answers to all the questions, [click on this link to submit your answers.](#)

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## Topics for further Bible study

[Is Church Membership Essential to Salvation?](#)

[How Many True Churches Are There?](#)

[Does God Approve of Denominationalism?](#)

[Should Babies Be Baptized?](#)

[Original Sin \(Inherited Depravity\)](#)

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