

The Holy Spirit in Conversion

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Many people think that the Holy Spirit operated in some special way in converting them and thus feel safe even though their conversions were different from those in the New Testament. However, we affirm emphatically that the only way the Holy Spirit works in conversion is through or by means of the Word of God.

Men are not converted by the Holy Spirit alone (Psalm 19:7). The Holy Spirit alone does not give light (Psalm 119:105,130). The Spirit alone does not make one free (John 8:31-32). The Spirit is not the only cleansing agency (John 15:3). The Word of God has an important part in the sanctification process (John 17:17). Also, the truth, and obedience to it, has a vital place in God's plan of conversion (1 Pet. 1:22).

The Word of God produces the faith which brings life in the name of Jesus (John 20:30-31). John declared, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life..." (1 John 5:13). Consequently, it's by the Holy Writings that we are assured of our salvation--both now and in the future. The only way we can know--be fully assured beyond all doubt--that we are saved, is when we have complied with the things written in the Word of God. No matter what a person might think or how he might feel, if he has not done what the Scriptures require, he is not saved, has never been converted, and does not have eternal life.

In every example in the New Testament, men were converted as result of hearing, believing and obeying the Word of God. There is not one instance in all the New Testament where one received a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in order to make him a child of God. In Acts the second chapter men heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, were by it convicted of their sins, and were made to believe in Jesus as the Son of God (vss. 22-36). In obedience to the commands of the gospel, they repented of their sins and were baptized for remission of sins (vss. 37-38, 41). In so doing, they were saved from heir sins--thus, converted--and were added to the church by the Lord (vs. 47).

Saul of Tarsus was instructed, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." (Acts 9:6). In the city he was commanded, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16). Cornelius was directed to send for Peter, "...Who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved." (Acts 11:14). In the light of the New Testament examples, we are forced to conclude that the Holy Spirit exercises His influence in conversion through the Word of God.

Those who keep God's Word thereby know they are in Him and are accepted with Him (1 John 2:5; Acts 10:34-35). God would be a respecter of persons if He arbitrarily assured one of his conversion but didn't another. Let us not be foolish and depend on some mysterious, so-called assurance of the Spirit, but rather let us be obedient to the Word of the Spirit for then, and only then, can we be certain of our salvation.