

## THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVICTION AND CONVERSION Acts 8:5-13

### Introduction:

1. The most important question one can ask is: “What must I do to be saved?”
2. The answer is given in the New Testament:
  - a. One must hear the Gospel (Rom. 1:16; 10:17).
  - b. One must believe the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4; Mark 16:15,16).
  - c. One must repent of his sins (2 Cor. 7:10; Acts 2:38).
  - d. One must confess his faith in Christ (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10).
  - e. One must be baptized for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3,4; Gal. 3:27).
3. When one has “obeyed from the heart” this form of doctrine (Rom. 6:16-18), he is born again (Jno. 3:5).
4. One can only be convicted of his sins and converted to Christ by the Holy Spirit (Jno. 16:7,8).
5. How does the Holy Spirit convict and convert the sinner?
6. Does He do it directly or by means?

### Discussion:

- I. MUCH OF THE RELIGIOUS WORLD ACCEPTS CALVINISM IN CONVICTION AND CONVERSION.
  - A. John Calvin was a 16 th century reformer in Geneva, Switzerland.
    1. He wrote Institutes of the Christian Religion.
    2. He borrowed heavily from Augustine, one of the “fathers” of the Roman Catholic Church.
  - B. The Synod of Dort in the Netherlands in 1618 formulated Calvin’s teachings into five basic points which makes an acrostic -TULIP.
  - C. Total hereditary depravity says the whole human race has inherited Adam’s sin.
    1. Innocent little babies are depraved sinners (Matt. 18:3).
    2. One is so depraved he can do nothing to save himself.
    3. The Bible says:
      - a. Man has free will (Josh. 24:14, 15).
      - b. Sin is that which one does, not inherits (1 Jno. 3:4).
      - c. Each person is responsible for his own sins (Ezek. 18:20).
  - D. Unconditional election says that God arbitrarily predestined

individuals to be saved or lost and there is nothing one can do to change it.

1. The Bible teaches God predestined the obedient to be saved (Eph. 1:4-6).
2. The Bible teaches that “whoever believes” can be saved (John 3:16).
3. The Gospel is for the whole world (Mark 16:15); for every nation (Matt. 28:19); and for every creature (Mark 16:15).
4. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34, 35).
5. God does not want any to be lost (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).

**E. Limited atonement says that Christ died only for the elect.**

1. If Christ died for only a select few, why did He command us to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15)?
2. The Bible says that Christ became man so that “He should taste death for every man” (Heb. 2:9).
3. He is the “propitiation for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

**F. Irresistible grace says that sinners are so depraved they cannot make moral decisions; they cannot even accept salvation unaided; God has to take the initiative.**

1. God sends the Holy Spirit into the hearts of the elect.
2. The Spirit miraculously implants faith in the hardened, depraved heart of the one born in sin.
3. The Divinely given faith responds to God’s grace and the sinner is saved.
4. A direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the human heart is essential for salvation according to this teaching.

**G. Perseverance of the saints says that the elect one is eternally secure regardless of what he does.**

1. This is often referred to as “once saved, always saved.”
2. A Baptist preacher wrote: “...all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger...The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul” (Sam Morris, Do A Christian’s Sins Damn His Soul?).
3. The Bible teaches a child of God can fall from grace and be lost (1 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 5:4; Heb. 3:12; 2 Pet. 2:20-22).

## **II. HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICT AND CONVERT SINNERS?**

**A. One must remember the relationship between the Spirit and the Word.**

1. The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3,4).
2. The Word is the instrument of the Spirit by which He operates on the human heart (Eph. 6:17).

3. A swordsman does not kill his enemy with his bare hands, nor does he credit his sword with it, but he kills the enemy with his sword.
4. The Word is powerful because it is inspired by the Holy Spirit (Heb. 4:12).

**B. The new birth is brought about by the Spirit through the Word (John 3:1-5).**

1. One must be born again to enter the kingdom.
2. There are two requirements for a birth:
  - a. A begetting.
  - b. A bringing forth.
3. In the new birth, faith in the heart of the sinner is begotten by the Spirit and he then is brought forth of the water in baptism.
4. How does the Spirit beget faith in the heart?
  - a. "Of His own will He brought forth us by the Word of truth" (Jam. 1:18).
  - b. "Having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God which lives and abides forever" (1 Pet. 1:23).
  - c. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17).
5. When one hears and believes, he is begotten of the Spirit; when he is baptized, he is brought forth of the water.
6. John 3:5 and Mark 16:15,16 are parallel.

**III. THE CONVERSIONS IN ACTS SHOW HOW THE SPIRIT WORKS IN CONVICTION AND CONVERSION.**

**A. The Jews on Pentecost were converted by the preaching of Peter (Acts 2:14-36).**

1. When they heard the Word, they were "cut to the heart."
2. They must have believed for they asked, "What shall we do?"
3. They were told to "repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38).

**B. The Samaritans were converted by the preaching of Philip (Acts 8:5-25).**

1. Philip preached Christ in Samaria (Acts 8:5).
2. He confirmed his message by miracles (Acts 8:6,7).
3. The people believed and were baptized (Acts 8:12).

**C. The Ethiopian Eunuch was converted by the preaching of Philip (Acts 8:26-40).**

1. The only direct part played by the Spirit was to tell Philip to

- go near the chariot (Acts 8:29).
    - 2. The eunuch was reading Isaiah's prophecy of Christ's death for our sins (Isa. 53; Acts 8:30-33).
    - 3. Philip "preached Jesus to him" (Acts 8:36).
    - 4. The eunuch believed as a result, confessed Christ, and was baptized (Acts 8:37-39).
- D. Saul was converted by the Spirit through the Word (Acts 9, 22, 26).
  - 1. The Lord appeared to him to qualify him to be an apostle (Acts 1:21, 22; 22:15; 1 Cor. 9:1).
  - 2. He still had to obey the Gospel to be saved (Acts 22:16).
- E. Cornelius was converted by the Spirit through the preaching of Peter (Acts 10, 11).
  - 1. Cornelius' conversion was a test case for he was the first Gentile convert.
  - 2. He and his household were baptized in the Holy Spirit while Peter was preaching to them.
  - 3. This was to show the Jewish Christians the Gentiles were also acceptable to God (Acts 10:44-48).
  - 4. Cornelius and his household were not converted by the baptism of the Spirit, but by the Spirit through the preaching of the Word (Acts 11:14).
- F. Two accounts of conversion are recorded in Acts 16:
  - 1. Lydia's heart was opened by the preaching of the Word and she was baptized (Acts 16:14, 15).
  - 2. The Jailor asked, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30-34).
    - a. They told him to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."
    - b. He could not believe unless he was first taught (Rom. 10:13-17).
    - c. Therefore, "they spoke unto him the Word of the Lord with all that were in his house."
    - d. He and his family were baptized immediately.

**Conclusion:**

- 1. The doctrine of the direct operation of the Spirit led to the "mourner's bench" system of conversion.
- 2. We must be born of water and the Spirit in order to enter the kingdom.