

SERIES: Marks of a Healthy Church
Mark #4- A Biblical Understanding of Conversion
Ezekiel 36:22-28; Titus 3:3-7

Conversion: What is it?

- A biblical understanding of conversion recognizes both what God does and what people do in salvation.
 - In conversion, God...
 - gives life to the dead (Eph. 2:5)
 - gives sight to the blind (2 Cor. 4:3-6)
 - gives the gifts of faith and repentance (Phil. 1:29; Acts 11:18).
 - And in conversion, people...
 - repent of sin (Mk. 1:15; Acts 3:19)
 - believe in Jesus (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 3:21-26).
- A biblical understanding of conversion recognizes that only God can save, and that he saves individuals by enabling them to respond to the gospel message through repenting of sin and trusting in Christ.

Where is it in the Bible?

- Jesus called people to repent and believe in him (Mk. 1:15). He said that unless someone is born again he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (Jn. 3:1-8).
- Throughout the book of Acts, the apostles call people to turn from their sin and trust in Christ (Acts 2:38, 3:19-20, 10:43, 13:38-39, 16:31, 17:30).
- Many of the epistles describe both our need to repent and believe in Christ and God's supernatural work to accomplish this (Rom. 6:1-23; 1 Cor. 2:14-15; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; Eph. 2:1-10; 1 Thess. 1:9-10; 2 Tim. 2:25-26).

Why is it important?

A biblical understanding of conversion is important for churches because

- It clarifies how churches should exhort non-Christians—they should call non-Christians to repent of sin and trust in Christ.
- It reminds churches that they must rely upon God in all of their evangelistic efforts; only he can give new spiritual life.
- It teaches churches to maintain a sharp distinction between themselves and the world.
 - Church members' lives should be marked by the fruit of conversion.
 - Churches should admit to baptism and the Lord's Supper only those who show evidence of conversion.

Regeneration: God changes our heart.

An instantaneous, unrepeatable, mysterious act of God in which He changes a lost sinner's heart.

- *An instantaneous...*
- *Unrepeatable...*
- *Mysterious act of God...*
 - From the **Father** (John 6:44)
 - Through the Son (1 Peter 1:3)
 - By the **Spirit** (Acts 10:44)
 - In the Word (1 Peter 1:23-25)
- *In which He changes a lost sinner's heart.*
 - Promised in the Old Testament
 - God will forgive his people of their sin.
 - God will **fill** his people with His Spirit.
 - God will transform their wants.
 - God will **enable** their wills.
 - Fulfilled in the New Testament
 - God **cleanses** us.
 - God **indwells** us.
 - He doesn't improve our **old** nature.
 - He imparts a **new** nature.
 - A new mind.
 - New desires.
 - We don't conquer sin by **working hard** to change our deeds.
 - We conquer sin by **trusting Christ** to change our desires.
 - A new will.
 - A new relationship.
 - With others who have been born again.
 - With God.

Conversion: God enables our belief.

The divinely enabled response of individuals to the gospel in which they turn from their sin and themselves (repent) and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord (believe).

- *The divinely enabled...*
 - Repentance is a **gift**.
 - Faith is a **gift**.
- *Response of individuals to the gospel...*
- *In which they turn from their sin and themselves (repent)...*
 - Repentance involves **intellectual** acknowledgement of sin.
 - But this alone is insufficient.
 - Repentance involves emotional sorrow over sin.
 - But this alone is insufficient.
 - Repentance involves a personal decision to **flee** sin.
- *And trust in Jesus (believe)...*
 - Faith involves knowledge **about** Christ.
 - But this alone is insufficient.
 - Faith involves assent to Christ.
 - But this alone is insufficient.
 - Faith involves **trust in** Christ.
- *As Savior and Lord.*
 - Jesus is the Savior who died for us.
 - Jesus is the **Lord** who rules over us.

Have you been born again? Look and live!

Regeneration: God changes our heart.

An instantaneous, unrepeatable, mysterious act of God in which He changes a lost sinner's heart.

- *An instantaneous...* (Acts 16:14)
- *Unrepeatable...* (Col. 2:13-14)
- *Mysterious act of God...* (John 3:8)
 - From the _____ (John 6:44)
 - Through the Son (1 Peter 1:3)
 - By the _____ (Acts 10:44)
 - In the Word (1 Peter 1:23-25)
- *In which He changes a lost sinner's heart.*
 - Promised in the Old Testament (Ezekiel 36:22-28)
 - God will forgive his people of their sin.
 - God will _____ his people with His Spirit.
 - God will transform their wants.
 - God will _____ their wills.
 - Fulfilled in the New Testament (John 3:5)
 - God _____ us. (1 Corinthians 6:11)
 - God _____ us. (Romans 8:9)
 - He doesn't improve our _____ nature.
 - He imparts a _____ nature. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
 - A new mind. (1 Corinthians 2:12-16)
 - New desires. (John 6:25-35)
 - We don't conquer sin by _____ to change our deeds.
 - We conquer sin by _____ to change our desires.
 - A new will. (Galatians 5:16-25)
 - A new relationship. (Ephesians 2:19-22)
 - With others who have been born again.
 - With God.

Conversion: God enables our belief.

The divinely enabled response of individuals to the gospel in which they turn from their sin and themselves (repent) and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord (believe).

- *The divinely enabled...*
 - Repentance is a _____. (Acts 5:31; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Timothy 2:25)
 - Faith is a _____. (Acts 14:27; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29)
- *Response of individuals to the gospel...* (Acts 2:38)
- *In which they turn from their sin and themselves (repent)...* (Matthew 4:17; Acts 3:19)
 - Repentance involves _____ acknowledgement of sin. (Psalm 51:4-5)
 - But this alone is insufficient.
 - Repentance involves emotional sorrow over sin. (2 Corinthians 7:9-10)
 - But this alone is insufficient.
 - Repentance involves a personal decision to _____ sin. (1 Thessalonians 1:9)
- *And trust in Jesus (believe)...* (Romans 10:9)
 - Faith involves knowledge _____ Christ. (John 8:24; Romans 10:14-17)
 - But this alone is insufficient. (James 2:19)
 - Faith involves assent to Christ. (John 20:31)
 - But this alone is insufficient. (Acts 26:27-28)
 - Faith involves _____ Christ. (John 1:12; 6:37; Matthew 11:28-30)
- *As Savior and Lord.*
 - Jesus is the Savior who died for us. (Acts 13:23)
 - Jesus is the _____ who rules over us. (Acts 2:36-38)

Have you been born again? Look and live!