



Basic Bible Course

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Eighth & Ninth Cases of Conversion — LYDIA & HER HOUSEHOLD PHILIPPIAN JAILER & HIS HOUSEHOLD



Lesson Nineteen

INTRODUCTION: Throughout the first twelve chapters of Acts, as we have seen, the apostle PETER is the dominant character. It was Peter, following our Lord's ascension into heaven (Acts 1), who led the others in selecting Matthias to take Judas' place (vacated by suicide) in the apostleship. It was Peter, who explained the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and used the keys of the Kingdom to admit JEWISH converts into the church on Pentecost (Acts 2). Peter was the spokesman at Solomon's Porch, when about five thousand converts were made at one time (Acts 3 & 4). When he and John were imprisoned (Acts 4), it was Peter, who made their principal defense. In Acts 5, it was Peter who reproved Ananias and Sapphira and had them buried, when they were slain by the Lord for lying. In Acts 8, Peter and John administered the Holy Spirit to the Samaritans; and Peter rebuked Simon for thinking to buy the gift of God with money. In Acts 9 Peter performed miracles at Lydda and Joppa. And, in our previous study of Acts 10 & 11, it was Peter who further used the keys of the kingdom to admit GENTILE converts into the church.

After recording Peter's being imprisoned again and his subsequent release in Acts 12, the rise of SAUL OF TARSUS, later called PAUL, is evident. Having been converted himself, in Acts 9, little more is heard of Saul until Acts 13. But from that chapter on to the end of Acts, it is Saul (or Paul), who clearly dominates the general scene. Thus it is that we come upon this apostle and his companion as they were instrumental in the EIGHTH case of conversion recorded in the Book of Acts—that of LYDIA AND HER HOUSEHOLD.

Eighth Case of Conversion— LYDIA & HER HOUSEHOLD

- I. PAUL AND SILAS WENT TO PHILIPPI, A CHIEF CITY OF MACEDONIA (Acts 16:12).
 - A. They abode there "certain days."
 - B. On the sabbath, they went to a place outside the city where prayers were wont to be made (verse 13).

NOTE: This place could have been an altar or perhaps a temple of prayer.

 1. It was located by a riverside.
 - C. They sat down at this place.
 - D. They spoke to the women, who had resorted there.

- II. AMONG THOSE WORSHIPPING WOMEN WAS ONE NAMED LYDIA.
 - A. Lydia was evidently a merchant of some sort; for she is called "a seller of purple" (verse 14).
 - B. Lydia was from the city of Thyatira.
 - C. She worshipped God.
 - D. She heard Paul and Silas.
 - E. The Lord opened her heart to their words.
 - F. Resulting from this she "ATTENDED" (i.e., gave heed) to the things spoken by Paul.

- G. She was BAPTIZED (verse 15).
- H. Her “household” ALSO was baptized.
- I. Following her conversion, she constrained Paul and Silas to be guests in her house.

NOTE: Those who seek self-justification for BAPTIZING INFANTS often refer to Lydia’s “HOUSEHOLD” being baptized. If the Scriptures said anything about there being any INFANTS in Lydia’s household, this contention might seem to have some strength. But the Scriptures are SILENT as to whom Lydia’s household comprised. As far as what is WRITTEN, we cannot tell whether Lydia was even MARRIED, much less had CHILDREN! It is a bald, unsupported, human assumption to contend there were INFANTS in her household. She could easily have had SERVANTS, KINSMEN, FRIENDS, and OTHERS living in her house—and NOT A CHILD AMONG THEM! Let us NOT ASSUME what is NOT SAID.

Ninth Case of Conversion— PHILIPPIAN JAILER & HIS HOUSEHOLD

- I. AFTER LYDIA’S CONVERSION, PAUL AND SILAS DID NOT LEAVE PHILIPPI AT ONCE.
 - A. Lydia, following her baptism, had persuaded them, saying, “If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*” (verse 15).
 - B. She constrained them to do so.
- II. WHILE THUS ABIDING AT PHILIPPI, ONE DAY, PAUL AND SILAS COME UPON A GIRL POSSESSED WITH A SPIRIT OF DIVINATION (verse 16).
 - A. Because of her strange power of fortune-telling, she brought her master much gain by soothsaying. (verse 16)
 - B. She followed Paul and those with him, saying, “These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation” (verse 17).
 - C. She did this repeatedly over a period of many days (verse 18).
- III. ONE DAY, PAUL, BEING VEXED WITH THIS CONTINUED OFFENSIVE PERFORMANCE, TURNED TO THE SPIRIT IN THE GIRL AND COMMANDED HIM IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST TO COME OUT OF HER (verse 18)
 - A. The spirit of divination came out that same hour (verse 18).
- IV. THE GIRL’S MASTERS SAW THUS THAT THEIR HOPE OF GAIN WAS GONE.
 - A. They caught Paul and Silas and drew them to the market place unto the rulers.
 - B. Before the magistrates they charged Paul and Silas saying,
 - 1. “These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city” and (verse 20).
 - 2. “teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans” (verse 21).
 - C. The multitude rioted against Paul and Silas (verse 22).
 - D. The magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded that Paul and Silas be beaten (verse 22).
 - 1. They laid many stripes upon Paul and Silas (verse 23).
 - 2. They cast them into prison.
 - 3. They charged the jailer to keep them safely.
 - E. The jailer, having received such a charge, thrust them into the INNER PRISON, i.e., dungeon (verse 24).
 - 1. To make doubly sure they did not escape, he fastened their feet in the stocks (verse 24).

- V. AT MIDNIGHT, THUS IMPRISONED, PAUL AND SILAS PRAYED AND SANG PRAISES UNTO GOD (verse 25).
- A. Other prisoners heard them.
- VI. SUDDENLY THERE WAS A GREAT EARTHQUAKE (verse 26).
- A. The foundations of the prison were shaken.
B. Immediately all the doors were opened.
C. Everyone's bands were loosed.
- VII. THE KEEPER OF THE PRISON, AWAKING OUT OF SLEEP (verse 27).
- A. Saw the prison doors opened.
B. Supposed that the prisoners had fled.
C. Drew out his sword.
D. Would have killed himself.
- VIII. BUT PAUL CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE, SAYING (verse 28).
- A. "Do thyself no harm" for
B. "We are all here."
- IX. THE JAILER CALLED FOR A LIGHT, SPRANG IN, CAME TREMBLING, AND FELL DOWN BEFORE PAUL AND SILAS (verse 29).
- A. He brought them out of the prison.
B. He said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (verse 30).
- X. PAUL AND SILAS ANSWERED, "BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED, AND THY HOUSE."
- A. To INDUCE BELIEF, Paul and Silas "SPAKE unto him the WORD OF THE LORD" (verse 32).
B. They also spoke this word unto ALL THAT WERE IN HIS HOUSE.
- NOTE: This was necessary, because faith (i.e., belief) comes by hearing the Word. Read Romans 10:13-17.**
- XI. HEARING THIS WORD NOT ONLY PRODUCED FAITH IN THE JAILER'S HEART, BUT LED HIM TO REPENT, AS WELL; FOR VERSE 33 TELLS US. "HE TOOK THEM THE SAME HOUR OF THE NIGHT, AND WASHED *THEIR* STRIPES..."
- XII. FURTHERMORE, BOTH THE JAILER AND ALL HIS HOUSE WERE BAPTIZED. THIS WAS DONE—
- A. "The same hour of the night" (verse 33).
B. "Straightway" (verse 33).
- XIII. AFTERWARD, THE JAILER BROUGHT THEM INTO HIS HOUSE (verse 34).
- A. He set meat before them.
B. He rejoiced.
C. He believed in God with all his house.
- NOTE: Both the eating and the rejoicing were delayed until AFTER the jailer and his household had been BAPTIZED.**

DISCUSSION: This thoroughgoing type of Bible study is calculated to eliminate the many misconceptions, which have gained currency among the people through carelessness. A text without its context is a pretext. Consider, for instance, how MANY have stumbled at the teaching in verses 30 and 31, simply by failing (or refusing) to give due consideration to the context. Many an otherwise splendid Bible teacher has used these two verses, irrespective of context, to support certain denominational ideas of "salvation by FAITH ONLY." He will read the question in verse 30, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Then he will read verse 31, as if it were the complete

answer, and stop. Well, truly, verse 31 says, “BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” But is that ALL it says? No. Verse 32 says, “And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.” We have already seen that hearing the Word of the Lord produces belief, i.e., faith. (Romans 10:17). This, in turn, led the now-believing jailer to REPENT, i.e., he washed their stripes (verse 33). He and all his, then, were BAPTIZED (verse 33).

No one denies that BELIEVING (faith) is essential to salvation. The WORD OF THE LORD says it is (verse 31); so it IS. But the Word of the Lord NOWHERE says that salvation is by FAITH ALONE. The same New Testament, which teaches faith (belief) for salvation, teaches REPENTANCE and BAPTISM for “remission of sins” (which is the same) (Acts 2:38). THE only place in the Bible where the words “faith only” appear, it says, “Ye see then how that by WORKS a man is justified, and NOT by FAITH ONLY” (James 2:24). Well, if God’s Word says man is NOT justified BY FAITH ONLY, why should ANYONE contend that he IS?

It all goes back to Martin Luther, who found himself unable to harmonize Ephesians 2:8-9 with James 2:24. The former says salvation is by grace through faith...NOT OF WORKS. The latter says we are justified BY WORKS...not by faith ONLY. As is true with so many such cases in the Bible, the discrepancy existed, not in the Bible, but in LUTHER’S THINKING. He failed to recognize at least THREE DISTINCT KINDS of WORKS are considered in the Bible: 1) WORKS OF THE LAW OF MOSES; 2) WORKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT; and 3) WORKS OF MAN’S OWN “RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Neither the works of MAN’S righteousness (i.e., meritorious works) nor the works of MOSES’ LAW have any standing before the Lord. In HIS sight the former are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6); and the latter were, in a figure, “nailed to the cross” (Colossians 2:14). Yet, the very next verse, after Paul said, “NOT of works,” he went ON to say, “For we are his WORKmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto GOOD WORKS, which GOD hath before ORDAINED that WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM.” So, then, we are saved NOT BY “WORKS” in ONE sense of the term; yet we ARE saved (i.e., justified) BY “WORKS” in another sense of the term. Hence the injunction, in Philippians 2:12, to “WORK OUT your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

Let no one, therefore, say it takes “EITHER FAITH OR WORKS.” According to the Scriptures, salvation takes “BOTH FAITH AND WORKS.” And among the ADDITIONAL things, as seen from our current study, the jailer not only BELIEVED, but he also REPENTED and was BAPTIZED.