



## Basic Bible Course

by *Ira Y. Rice, Jr.*

### Summing Up God's RECORD OF CONVERSIONS (All 11 Cases) in Acts



### Lesson Twenty-One

FROM THE OUTSET of this course of study, we have most carefully avoided rushing to conclusions, in order to make as few mistakes as possible concerning the Word of God. When we came to Lesson 14, how easy it would have been merely to announce some plan of “conversion” of our own **human** device and then to rush along to other matters. On the other hand, seeing that the **eternal destiny** of precious human **souls** is at stake, how unfair and inconsiderate this would have been!

Contrariwise, we have slowly and deliberately paced ourselves to a point-by-point examination of **each and every one** of the **11 cases of conversion**, as recorded in God’s “book of conversions,” the book of ACTS. Up to this lesson, remember, we have studied each of these cases individually. However, it should be abundantly clear to all, by now, that **all** of God’s teaching is **not limited** to the record of any **single** case of conversion. God’s Word is just not written that way. But, as Isaiah 28:10 describes it, “precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; HERE a little, and THERE a little.”

If we limit our conclusions to the “little” we find “**here**,” but ignore the “little” we find “**there**,” we not only deal unfairly with the way the Bible is written; but we arrive at **wrong answers**, as well. Please remember that “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” It follows, therefore, that any conclusions or preconceived notions we may have entertained, WHICH LEAVE OUT ANY PART of God’s teaching on the subject of conversion—such conclusions or notions are just WRONG; AND GOD’S WORD is STILL RIGHT! As Romans 3:4 says it: “God forbid: yea, LET **GOD BE TRUE**, BUT EVERY **MAN A LIAR**; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou are judged.”

That ALL of the ways and plans for salvation, being taught all over the world, cannot be true should be self-evident. Many of them are CONTRADICTIONARY. And when churches and preachers teach **opposing** doctrines on anything, can BOTH be RIGHT? For instance, one church teaches and practices “**infant baptism**”; another contends one must be at least **16 years old**. Are BOTH RIGHT? **Both** MAY be wrong; but one just HAS to be wrong. How can they teach so oppositely to each other and both be right!

Most so-called “Protestant” church teach that salvation is by “FAITH ONLY” or by “FAITH ALONE.” The “Catholic” Church contends that “WORKS” are necessary, too! Are BOTH right?

Some churches contend one is saved the moment he BELIEVES; others, that he must also REPENT; still others, that he must CONFESS and BE BAPTIZED.

Are ALL right?

One church teaches IMMERSION for BAPTISM; another contends that “SPRINKLING” and “POURING” are “just as good.”

Are BOTH right?

One church argues for baptism in WATER; another says, No, we must be baptized with the baptism of the HOLY SPIRIT!

Are BOTH right?

One declares that baptism is “FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS”; another says it is NOT for the remission of sins.

Are BOTH right?

Such contradictory teachings can be cited “ad infinitum.” It is quite possible that ALL may be WRONG; is it NOT POSSIBLE that ALL may be RIGHT! However, it IS possible that amid the welter of all such confusion and contradiction, the truth may be found. But, if the truth is in there somewhere, how shall we ferret it out and know for sure that it IS the TRUTH?

There is ONLY ONE WAY to arrive at any responsible, reliable conclusion in this matter, as far as the WORD OF GOD is concerned. We must examine carefully and study prayerfully ANYTHING and EVERYTHING God's Word has to say in this connection, add it ALL up, and see what ALL God has taught on the subject.

ALL OTHER WAYS are partial, incomplete and, to some extent, at least, untrue.

THIS WAY is thorough, complete, and leaves nothing to guesswork. For the “SUMMING UP” of ALL 11 CASES OF CONVERSION, study the accompanying chart on “ACTS OF APOSTLES”—BOOK OF CONVERSIONS.

Now, from the CHART, please note that we have correlated ALL THE PERTINENT facts REGARDING Conversion from the 11 cases as recorded in “Acts.” To facilitate our study, separate columns are arranged so as to accommodate each fact, command or promise given pertaining to conversion. On the left-hand side of the chart, you will note all 11 cases of conversion listed in order and the chapter or chapters cited where found. In each case, since teaching or preaching was done, the next column takes account of this, and cites the references in evidence. The succeeding five columns show what the various sinners did in being converted, in reaction to the teaching and preaching that was done. Then, lastly, the right-hand column lists the RESULTS received (or promised) from obeying the FORM OF DOCTRINE thus described.

The record of each case of conversion, as you observe, is NOT UNIFORM throughout. **Some** cases are described in detail; others rather sketchily. In **ALL cases it is clearly shown that TEACHING and/or PREACHING was done.** Thus, for example, whereas, in Case No. V, the Scriptures do not SAY **in so many words** that the sinner HEARD what was preached. It is **necessarily inferred** from the context that he did. The same goes for Case No. IX: In the conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Case No. VI), nothing is said of his BELIEVING what he heard—or of REPENTANCE or of CONFESSING his faith. Yet, the fact that he was BAPTIZED implies that he obeyed the gospel Ananias preached unto him. In only **three** of the cases of conversion is REPENTANCE either mentioned, commanded or described. (Cases No. I, III & IX). Yet, in Acts 17:30, we learn that God “now commandeth ALL MEN EVERYWHERE to **REPENT.**” Thus it is not necessary that repentance be specified in **each case**, since God requires it of ALL! The fact that it is mentioned in the three cases referred to is sufficient to show the connection of REPENTANCE in God's order for man's conversion. The only case showing CONFESSION (of faith), please note, is that of the Ethiopian eunuch—Case No. V. God does not have to repeat something MANY times to make it **so**. ONE time is enough! The one time Acts mentions the eunuch confessing, “**I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,**” is sufficient to include CONFESSION OF SUCH BELIEF in God's teaching on conversion.

Although practically all so-called “Christian” denominations deny baptism as having any connection at all with conversion (turning to God), how curious it is of God to record baptism IN THIS VERY CONNECTION in **10** of the **11** cases of conversion described! The **only** case that does **not** specifically mention baptism is Case No. II—at Solomon's Porch. Whereas, on Pentecost, Peter had commanded, “Repent...and BE BAPTIZED,” at Solomon's Porch, he commanded, “Repent...and BE CONVERTED.” Inasmuch as ALL TEN OF THE OTHER CASES OF CONVERSION mention **BAPTISM** at this point, it seems reasonable to infer that Peter's command to “be converted” must have included **baptism**, too. Do you agree?

As for the RESULTS either granted or to be expected, based on obedience to the things commanded, **NO SINGLE CASE OF CONVERSION MENTIONS ALL.** On Pentecost (see right-hand column on the chart) at least **three** results are mentioned; at Solomon's Porch, **three more.** Also in the cases of the Ethiopian eunuch, Saul of Tarsus, Cornelius and the Philippian Jailer, results are cited.

Since **no ONE case** sets forth everything Acts teaches on conversion, how, then, shall we arrive at the **sum total of the true teaching** on this subject in this extraordinary book of conversions? Surely, it must be by **COMBINING ALL THE INFORMATION** in the several columns together!

In arithmetical addition, we should proceed from right to left. In algebra, addition is from left to right. Seeing that our information logically proceeds from left to right, let us add it all up algebraically—column by column—and see what is the GRAND TOTAL, as set forth in Acts, on the subject of conversion.

Reading across the bottom of the chart, after we have added the information in each column all together, here is the conclusion of all our studies, in Acts, thus far: That TEACHING and/or PREACHING started each case; sinners, thus, HEARD the gospel, leading them to BELIEVE in Christ, to REPENT of their sins, to CONFESS their faith and to BE BAPTIZED. Resulting from these conversions, those thus obeying the form of doctrine taught and/or preached received REMISSION OF SINS, RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT, WERE SAVED, HAD THEIR SINS BLOTTED OUT, ENJOYED “TIMES OF REFRESHING,” WERE BLESSED, REJOICED, and had their SINS WASHED AWAY.