

could tell you that all you need to do to be saved is to pray for forgiveness and invite Jesus to come into your life as your Lord and Saviour. But lying is a sin (Revelation 22:15), and that would be a lie, for the inspired word of God never reveals anyone becoming a Christian in such a manner.

Then again, I could tell you that salvation is by faith only and make a lot of friends in this life, trusting that in all probability you would never locate me in the darkness that would surely come (Matthew 25:30). Well, upon further consideration, what could you do to me that would make that existence any worse (Matthew 25:41; Mark 9:44)? For salvation is not by faith only (James 2:24), nor by any other "only". Or, I could simply tell you the truth. Granted, it will not be nearly so popular, perhaps not even a single soul will respond. But the seed will be sown (Luke 8:11), hearts will be searched (Hebrews 4:12), and I will be free from your blood if the gospel is rejected (Acts 20:26-27). On the other hand, I would be blessed both in time and eternity with the presence of another soul if the gospel is obeyed. Therefore, I have everything to gain by preaching the truth (I Timothy 4:16), and everything to lose by failing to (Galatians 1:8-9).

Now I believe we are ready for the truth concerning salvation as provided by Him who is the author (Hebrews 5:8-9): 1) Hearing: The first step of salvation is in hearing the glorious gospel of Christ. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). 2) Belief: You must believe the gospel of Christ (Mark 16:15-16). Certainly a significant part would be in believing that Jesus is who He claimed to be (John 8:24). John stated that a whole book was written "...that ye might believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and believing ye might have life through His name." (John 20:31). 3) Repentance: Repentance (which is a change of heart which leads to a change of life) is commanded (Acts 17:30), defined (II Corinthians 7:9-10) and illustrated (Matthew 21:28-31). 4) Confession: Confession is a condition unto salvation (Romans 10:10), a condition that is recorded (Acts 8:37) and emphasized (Matthew 10:32-33). 5) Baptism: Baptism (immersion) is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16) and is the only means by which one can get into Christ Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:27). That begins a new life (II Corinthians 5:17), a life that must remain consecrated to the service of the Master until your time is no more (Revelation 2:10). That, beloved, is Biblical salvation. Are you ready for a pilgrimage that will span your lifetime? Then obey Him today (II Corinthians 6:2), for there may be no tomorrow (Luke 12:20). (511 E. Madison Ave., Springfield, Ohio 45503).

A COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF THE CONVERSIONS IN THE BOOK OF ACTS THOMAS MCDONALD

During the conversion on the Day of Pentecost the Jews had gathered around the Apostles to hear them preach. And God had bestowed them with the ability to speak in tongues. This way they were able to spread the word to all different nations there in the group. It is stated in verse 21 "And *it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" The group that was gathered around the Apostles heard the message and word. The similarity factor in this is they heard the gospel and obeyed and were saved from their past sins. The contrasting factor in this from other conversions is that they were only told to repent and be baptized rather than believe, repent, confess and be baptized.

The next chapter in the book of Acts shows Peter and John in the Temple and they come across a man who had been lame since birth. After Peter had healed the lame man he began preaching to the group which had seen the lame man healed. It is in verse 19 that Peter makes this statement. "*Repent*

ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." The similarity factor in this is that it is another event in which Peter preaches the word to the group like on the Day of Pentecost and people obeyed. The Contrasting Factor in this is that Peter said "*Repent ye therefore, and be converted*" rather than believe, repent, confess and be baptized. The words "be converted" means "be baptized."

The next conversion that took place is in chapter 8 in which we see Simon being baptized by Philip. In this particular case we see Simon starting out as a sorcerer and was tricking people into thinking that he had actual magical powers. It was only when Philip began preaching to the people, that they saw that Philip was the one who had real power. Then they, along with Simon, were baptized. The similarity Factor in this is that Simon heard the word, believed was baptized just as many others that had been by following the Word that Philip had delivered. The Contrasting factor in this is that Simon had not been told to repent and confess.

Also in the same chapter We see the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch. The Ethiopian Eunuch is studying from the Book of Isaiah when Philip was coming through. Philip asked him if he understood what he read and when the Eunuch told him no. Philip began teaching him and when they passed a body of water the Eunuch asked "*see here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?*" (Acts 8:36) Then Philip baptized him. The Similarity factor in this is that Philip preached to him and baptized him. The contrasting factor in this is the confession that he made when he said "*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*" Acts 8:37).

In the 9th chapter we see one of the most famous apostles known as Paul who before conversion was known as Saul was converted and baptized. After the death of Stephen Saul took some men and started out to the road to Damascus, while on the way he was visited by Jesus and was blinded by the sight of Jesus. When they reached Damascus they stayed at a house and Ananias went there (following Gods instructions to do so), he is healed and then is baptized. The similarity Factor is that he heard the word, and was baptized. The Contrasting Factor in this is that he had not been told to believe, repent and confess.

The next conversion was of the centurion Cornelius. Peter had preached the gospel to him and had baptized him. This conversion involved the entire household of Cornelius. The Similarity Factor in this is that He and his family heard the Gospel, followed the gospel, and were baptized. The Contrasting Factor in this is that there is no mention of the other steps to follow to be saved in this particular event. Although this does not mean that Peter did not teach these steps otherwise they would not have been able to be baptized.

The next account is the conversion of Lydia. She was a seller of purple that had heard the word and was baptized. This was accomplished by Paul when he was passing through the city of Thyatira. This city followed Gods laws and studied the word. The Similarity factor in this is that the preaching and baptism are present. The Contrasting factor in this is that it does not mention the other steps.

The next is the conversion of the Philippian Jailor. When Paul and Silas were being held in prison an experience for the Jailor happened that night when the cell doors were shook open by a great quake caused only by God. The Jailor asked what needed to be done to be saved and Paul and Silas explained it to him. They went back to the Jailors house where his whole family was taught and then were baptized in the same hour of the night. The Similarity Factor of this conversion is that the whole family of the jailor were taught and baptized. The Contrasting Factor is that the Jailor was told to believe and his he and his house would be saved. He also showed repentance by taking Paul and Silas the same hour of the night and washing their stripes.

The next conversion is the conversion of Crispus and many of the Corinthians (Continued on back)