

STEP BY STEP
Part Five in a Series of Eight



5. Telling Matters

**SHARING
THE GOSPEL**

'caring for **PEOPLE** for **PEOPLE** matter to God' Romans 5:8

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

When a person becomes a Christian people notice. Every person who becomes a Christian gets a variety of different responses from all those round about. Some are genuinely pleased, even if they don't completely understand it. Some are resentful, some are even plain angry. This response always surprises the new Christian.

WHY SHOULD PEOPLE BE ANGRY WITH ME FOR BECOMING A CHRISTIAN?

The reason for this is that the other person regards it as an implied criticism of them. They never saw the need to take the step, some have, and hence they consider it to be a statement of some shortfall in them. Others are interested in what a Christian has done because they sense in their own lives a lack. They do not have this relationship with God that Christians have and they are interested to learn more about it.

Although some people have learned enough to become a Christians, there may be the feeling that perhaps if you ever become a Christian you wouldn't be quite sure how to show it with other people.

But other people will want to know.

WHY HAVE YOU DONE THIS? WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO BE BAPTIZED? WHY BAPTISM? WHY THIS CHURCH OF CHRIST?

In fact, as a new Christian, they are presented with many new opportunities to share the great gospel they have found with other people.

BUT WHAT DO YOU SAY? HOW DOES ONE BECOME A CHRISTIAN? WHERE WERE THOSE PASSAGES I WAS SHOWN AGAIN?

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

The purpose of this lesson is to make a simple survey of what the New Testament has to say about how to become a Christian so that the new Christian knows where to go to show others from the New Testament how to take that step too.

WHAT DID JESUS SAY?

1. Matthew 18:1-3 'At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.'

Note the **two things** that Jesus says about becoming a Christian. It involves turning. **Turning away from sin and turning towards God.** And it involves **becoming like children.**

WHAT DID JESUS MEAN BY THIS?

Perhaps His statements to Nicodemus will shed more light.

2. John 3:3-5 'Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.'

Today we hear much about 'born-again Christians'. The Scripture knows of no other kind. If one is to become a Christian it must be by being born again. If one is born again, then one is a Christian.

BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BORN AGAIN?

Jesus explains, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'

STAGES OF CONVERSION

One needs to be born of the water (be baptized into Christ) and be born of the Spirit (receive the gift of the Holy Spirit) at one's baptism. It is by the indwelling Spirit of God that life is brought, and Christians are brought from death to life through the Gospel.

3. We note the teaching of Jesus as He gives the Great Commission to His apostles. Matthew 28:18-20 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

Note the three stages mentioned in this conversion. First of all, they are to become disciples (learners and followers) of Jesus. Secondly, they are to be baptized into Christ. Thirdly they are to continue to be taught all the teachings of Jesus so that they can implement them in their lives.

4. In Mark's account of the Great Commission we see a simplified statement made by Jesus. Mark 16:15-16 'He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.'

The whole world is to be preached to. And those who believe and respond to the Gospel by being baptised will be saved.

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

HOW DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT SAY THAT WE CAN BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

5. Romans 10:13-14 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

NECESSARY STEPS TOWARDS SALVATION

People are saved by hearing the Gospel. It is not by some direct operation of the Holy Spirit intervening, but by the preaching of the simple Gospel.

6. Ephesians 2:13 'But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.'

Those who are in Christ have been brought near to God through the blood of Christ. The 'in Christ' people are in the church. It follows that in the church we are brought near to God.

7. John 3:16 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'

John 8:24 'I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins.'

It is by **believing** in Jesus that we are saved. Indeed, Jesus says that unless we believe in Him we cannot be saved.

8. Luke 13:3 'But unless you repent, you too will all perish.'

Acts 3:19 'Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.'

The Bible speaks about the necessity of **repentance**. Repenting means to **turn away from sin, and turn towards God**. It does not simply mean to feel regret, but it is a firm decision of the will to live for God and not self.

9. Romans 10:9-10 'If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.'

IT'S NOT POSSIBLE TO BE A SECRET CHRISTIAN

Matthew 10:32-33 'Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.'

Christians need to **acknowledge** Christ before men. The New Testament calls this confessing Christ. This is different from confessing sin; it is publicly **acknowledging** that we believe in Jesus.

Note how the New Testament links this with salvation. It is **not possible** to be a secret Christian

10. Acts 2:38 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'

Galatians 3:26-27 'So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.'

We are to be **baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of our sins**. Note how baptism is linked here with getting into Christ, uniting with Christ to be cleansed by His blood, and hence receive the forgiveness of sins.

CONVERSION EXAMPLES

There are different views about how one should become a Christian. One person says one thing and another something completely different. We have just studied passages from the New Testament, which seems to clearly outline the method by which people become Christians.

It is interesting to read through the **Book of Acts** to notice examples of people becoming converted having heard the preaching of the apostles. We might call the **Book of Acts** the **Book of conversions**.

A TREASURE TO BE SHARED

As part of your study this week, take time to read each of the conversion accounts mentioned **on the back page** and put a + or a - in the appropriate column when that action is present or not. It should be clear that in some passages, belief is not specifically mentioned but perhaps implied. Likewise, in some others repentance is not specifically mentioned but implied.

Hence the clearest way to understand the process of conversion is to sum up all that we learn from all of the above passages. We can think about the conversion process as a five-step plan.

Although as Christians grow in Christ they learn to appreciate the gospel plan much more and understand more deeply the implications of each step, this is perhaps an easy way for Christians to remember it initially.

When you have followed that 5-step plan, it will not be difficult for you to explain it to others.

CONCLUSION

Christians know that they have found a great treasure in the Gospel of Christ. In obedience to that Gospel Christians have found the unsurpassable blessing of forgiveness of sins, adoption into God's family, inner peace knowing that you are at one with God, joy in realising your salvation in Christ, and the hope of heaven.

It is natural for Christians to want to share those blessings with others. The above plan of salvation is what you will want to share. If you become a Christian and you want to share the Gospel with others and you feel a little uncertain, why not get the assistance of some other Christians. Do what Cornelius did and invite others to come over and listen and invite one of your brothers or sisters in Christ over to help you share the good news with them.

Or step out in faith and share the simple gospel yourself. God will bless you for loving them enough to share the Gospel, and you will grow each time you do so.

EVALUATION SHEET

Please go ahead and fill in the evaluation sheet attached.

CONTACT DETAILS

Email: info@the-scriptures.co.uk

EVALUATION SHEET

Step by Step Lesson 5

(Please type or write your answers within the lines provided)

Name:

Home Address or Email address:

QUESTIONS:

(Please reply with your answers via e-mail or a separate sheet of paper.)

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	HEAR	BELIEVE	REPENT	CONFESS	BAPTISE
Acts 2:36-42					
Acts 8:4-12					
Acts 8:13					
Acts 8:26-39					
Acts 9:17-20					
Acts 10:25-48					
Acts 16:13-15					
Acts 16:23-34					
Acts 18:4-11					
Acts 22:1-16					

SENDING YOUR ANSWERS

Once we have received your evaluation sheet we will send you the **next study** in the series.

Please return your completed evaluation sheet as an email attachment to info@the-scriptures.co.uk