

## Lesson 84 – To Be Converted

### 1. Who are to be converted? **Psalms 51:13**

**EGW:** We have the promise, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," even so was "the Son of man... lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." We are to "look and live." Sinful and unworthy, we must cast our helpless souls upon the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. Then will God restore unto us the joy of his salvation, and uphold us by his free Spirit. Then we may teach transgressors his way, and sinners shall be converted unto him. {RH, May 22, 1888 par. 16}

### 2. How are they to be converted? **Psalms 51:13**

**EGW:** But in order for us to fulfill God's purpose, there is a preparatory work to be done. The Lord bids us empty our hearts of the selfishness which is the root of alienation. He longs to pour upon us His Holy Spirit in rich measure, and He bids us clear the way by self-renunciation. When self is surrendered to God, our eyes will be opened to see the stumbling stones which our un-Christlikeness has placed in the way of others. All these God bids us remove. He says: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." James 5:16. Then we may have the assurance that David had when, after confession of his sin, he prayed: "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee." Psalm 51:12, 13. {6T 43.2}

### 3. What specific "way" is to convert the soul? **Psalms 19:7**

**EGW:** We are called to represent to the world the character of God as it was revealed to Moses. In answer to the prayer of Moses, "Show me Thy glory," the Lord promised, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee." "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Exodus 33:18, 19; 34:6, 7. This is the fruit that God desires from His people. In the purity of their characters, in the holiness of their lives, in their mercy and loving-kindness and compassion, they are to demonstrate that "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Psalm 19:7. {CH 203.4}

### 4. What are God's ways considered? **Isaiah 1:27, Romans 8:4**

**EGW:** The Lord's work needs to be distinguished from the common affairs of life. He says: "I will turn My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." Isaiah 1:25-27. These words are full of importance. They have a lesson for all who occupy the editorial chair. {7T 152.3}

5. What two things prevents people from being converted? **Isaiah 6:9-10 [Hint: The answer is in verse 9.]**

**EGW:** The heavenly visitant bade the waiting messenger: "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." Verses 9, 10. {RH, March 11, 1915 par. 8}

The prophet's duty was plain; he was to lift his voice in protest against the prevailing evils. But he dreaded to undertake the work without some assurance of hope. "Lord, how long? (verse 11) he inquired. Are none of thy chosen people ever to understand, and repent, and be healed? {RH, March 11, 1915 par. 9}

His burden of soul in behalf of erring Judah was not to be borne in vain. His mission was not to be wholly fruitless. Yet the evils that had been multiplying for many generations could not be removed in his day. Throughout his lifetime he must be a patient, courageous teacher--a prophet of hope as well as of doom. The divine purpose finally accomplished, the full fruitage of his efforts, and of the labors of all God's faithful messengers, would appear. A remnant should be saved. That this might be brought about, the messages of warning and entreaty were to be delivered to the rebellious, the Lord declared, "until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land." Verses 11, 12. {RH, March 11, 1915 par. 10}

6. What three things did Jesus bring out that prevents people from being converted? **Matthew 13:15**

**EGW:** It is a fearful thing to have great light and blessing, to have many opportunities and privileges, and yet make no saving use of them. Those who do not make a saving use of their opportunities, will be condemned by the privileges God has granted to them; but those who walk in the light will have

increased light. Those who have had the light of truth, and yet have failed to walk in the light, are under the same sentence of condemnation as were Chorazin and Bethsaida. Shall not these warnings be heeded? Shall not these admonitions have weight with us? In the near future it will be seen just who have been walking humbly with God, and who have been obeying his orders. Those who have been walking in the sparks of their own kindling will lie down in sorrow. It will be seen that they have made a terrible mistake. O let us awake! light is now shining; let the windows of the mind and heart be open to welcome the heaven-sent rays. Shall Jesus say of those who profess to obey the truth, and yet who fail to walk in its light, "In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them"? [Matthew 13:14, 15.] --MS. {CE 140.2}

7. What did Jesus use to speak to the people that ended up fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy? **Matthew 13:13-14**

**EGW:** "The disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables; because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive; for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." {ST, October 24, 1892 par. 1}

Jesus said to his disciples, "It is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." He did not mean by mysteries the things that could not be understood; but those things that could be comprehended by the human mind when enlightened by the Spirit of God. To those who were humble of heart, who trusted not in their own wisdom or righteousness, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven could be revealed. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent [the worldly wise,] and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." {ST, October 24, 1892 par. 2}

8. What two things were done so that people would not see or understand? **John 12:40**

**EGW:** "Yet a little while is the light with you," Christ continued. "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." Whence came their hardness of heart?--Through transgression. The parable of the unfaithful husbandmen shows plainly that the Jews carried out their ambitious desires till the love and fear of God departed from them. {RH, November 13, 1900 par. 9}

No one is to understand from this scripture that God arbitrarily blinded the eyes and hardened the hearts of the Jews. It was Christ's work to soften hard hearts. But if men resisted the work of Christ, the sure result would be that their hearts would become hardened. {RH, November 13, 1900 par. 10}

Christ quoted a prophecy which more than a thousand years before had predicted what God's foreknowledge had seen would be. The prophecies do not shape the characters of the men who fulfill them. Men act out their own free will, either in accordance with a character placed under the molding of God or a character placed under the harsh rule of Satan. {RH, November 13, 1900 par. 11}

9. Was it for lack of trying to have people see and understand, pointing to the fact that it was not purposeful blinding and closing of the ears but a result of His actions? **John 12:37-40**

**EGW:** No greater evidence than this could have been given. Would not the rulers who had before been convinced in regard to the Saviour's divinity now believe in him and confess him? Was not the miracle he had performed wonderful enough to lead them to do this? It was indeed enough to banish all prejudice even in the most unbelieving. But the hearts of the Jewish leaders were filled with the bitterest opposition, and instead of yielding to their convictions, they were maddened because Christ had done something which they could not possibly refute. In their stubbornness, self-exaltation, and proud boasting, they would not humble themselves to confess that they were in error. "Though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him." {RH, November 13, 1900 par. 14}

10. Through the use of miracles, what would have been a proper response instead of hardening up? **Psalms 22:14**

**EGW:** (no comment)

11. It may seem unfair that Jesus spoke in parables, but what word identifies that the people in general were not interested in the true meaning anyways? **Mark 4:10-12 [Hint: The answer is in verse 11.]**

**EGW:** His followers were mortified that the learned and wealthy were not the most willing to accept Jesus as their Saviour. They felt the stigma that attached to their Master, because it was the poor, the afflicted, and the humbler class generally who became his disciples. Why, they asked themselves, did not the scribes and Pharisees, the teachers in the schools of the prophets, acknowledge that he was the long-looked-for Messiah? It was to meet this doubt and discontent that Jesus spoke this parable. When the multitude had departed, the twelve with the other believers gathered about him, and asked him to explain it to them. "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables; that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?" In these words he explained that his illustrations were to awaken thought in the minds of his hearers. If they desired a fuller explanation of his words they could ask it of him, as the disciples had done, and receive it. {4Red 80.3}

12. In every generation it seems that Isaiah's prophecy applies, but who will eventually hear it pointing to the fact that it is unconverted church members that have the problem? **Acts 28:25-28**

**EGW:** (no comment)

13. When the latter rain, the power of the Holy Spirit, the angel of Revelation 18 comes upon the people, who shall hear and be converted and represents unbelievers? **Isaiah 60:1-5**

**EGW:** When God's people so fully separate themselves from evil that he can let the light of heaven rest upon them in rich measure, and shine forth from them to the world, then there will be fulfilled, more fully than it has ever been fulfilled in the past, the prophecy of Isaiah, in which the servant of God declared of the remnant church in the last days: "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto

thee." {RH, March 31, 1910 par. 9}

14. In Isaiah 60:5, what does the sea represent making Isaiah a worldwide activity? **Revelation 17:15**

**EGW:** (no comment)

15. What does conversion allow people to enter into? **Matthew 18:3**

**EGW:** It was not enough for the disciples of Jesus to be instructed as to the nature of His kingdom. What they needed was a change of heart that would bring them into harmony with its principles. Calling a little child to Him, Jesus set him in the midst of them; then tenderly folding the little one in His arms He said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The simplicity, the self-forgetfulness, and the confiding love of a little child are the attributes that Heaven values. These are the characteristics of real greatness. {DA 437.1}

16. If converted, what are we to become in the means of attitude? **Matthew 18:3**

**EGW:** Said Christ to His disciples: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." He explained His meaning to them. He did not wish them to become children in understanding, but in malice. Little children do not manifest feelings of superiority and aristocracy. They are simple and natural in their appearance. Christ would have His followers cultivate unaffected manners, that their whole bearing may be humble and Christlike. He has made it our duty to live for others' good. He came from the royal courts of heaven to this world to show how great an interest He had in man, and the infinite price paid for the redemption of man shows that man is of so great value that Christ could sacrifice His riches and honor in the royal courts to lift him from the degradation of sin. {3T 529.1}

17. Despite being a follower of Jesus, a close disciple, who needed converted? **Luke 22:31-32**

**EGW:** Peter was naturally forward and impulsive, and Satan had taken advantage of these characteristics to overthrow him. Just before the fall of Peter, Jesus had said to him, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22:31, 32. That time had now come, and the transformation in Peter was evident. The close, testing questions of the Lord had not called

out one forward, self-sufficient reply; and because of his humiliation and repentance, Peter was better prepared than ever before to act as shepherd to the flock. {DA 812.3}

18. Upon conversion, what can people then do towards others? **Luke 22:32**

**EGW:** The Lord Jesus said to Peter, "When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren;" and after his resurrection, just before his ascension, he said to his disciples, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs." This was a work in which Peter had but little experience; but he could not be complete in Christian life unless he learned to feed the lambs, those who are young in the faith. It would require great care, much patience and perseverance to give those who are ignorant the suitable teachings, opening up to them the Scriptures, and educating them for usefulness and duty. This is the work that must be done in the church at this day, or the advocates of truth will have a dwarfed experience, and will be exposed to temptation and deception. The charge given to Peter should come home to every minister. Again and again, the voice of Christ is heard repeating the charge to his undershepherds, "Feed my lambs, Feed my sheep." {RH, September 6, 1892 par. 10}

19. What action leads to conversion? **Acts 3:19**

**EGW:** A solemn responsibility rests upon those who know the truth, that all their works shall correspond with their faith, and that their lives shall be refined and sanctified, and they be prepared for the work that must rapidly be done in these closing days of the message. They have no time or strength to spend in the indulgence of appetite. The words should come to us now with impelling earnestness: "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." Acts 3:19. There are many among us who are deficient in spirituality and who, unless they are wholly converted, will certainly be lost. Can you afford to run the risk? {9T 154.3}

20. Upon conversion, what happens to our sins? **Acts 3:19**

**EGW:** How shall a man be just with God? How shall the sinner be made righteous? It is only through Christ that we can be brought into harmony with God, with holiness; but how are we to come to Christ? Many are asking the same question as did the multitude on the Day of Pentecost, when, convicted of sin, they cried out, "What shall we do?" The first word of Peter's answer was, "Repent." Acts 2:37, 38. At another time, shortly after, he said, "Repent, . . . and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3:19. {SC 23.1}

Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we

see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life. {SC 23.2}

There are many who fail to understand the true nature of repentance. Multitudes sorrow that they have sinned and even make an outward reformation because they fear that their wrongdoing will bring suffering upon themselves. But this is not repentance in the Bible sense. They lament the suffering rather than the sin. Such was the grief of Esau when he saw that the birthright was lost to him forever. Balaam, terrified by the angel standing in his pathway with drawn sword, acknowledged his guilt lest he should lose his life; but there was no genuine repentance for sin, no conversion of purpose, no abhorrence of evil. Judas Iscariot, after betraying his Lord, exclaimed, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." Matthew 27:4. {SC 23.3}

21. Upon conversion of members that do err in the faith, what are they to be brought back to? **James 5:19-20**

**EGW:** Will you not, my brethren, examine yourselves, to see if there are not humble confessions to be made of evil surmising,--watching for evil, thinking evil, and talking evil,--for if these things are cherished, God cannot bless you. All this must be put out of the heart. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. {RH, December 18, 1888 par. 13}

22. What are such conversions saved from pointing to this being a salvation issue? **James 5:20**

**EGW:** There is but one power that can bring us into conformity to the likeness of Christ, that can make us steadfast, and keep us constant. It is the grace of God which leads us to obey the law of God, the transcript of the divine character. It is a knowledge of Christ Jesus which we should cultivate to the uttermost of our power in order that we may be doers of his word. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Is not this a work that pays? Will we make Jesus glad? Will we cause rejoicing among the angels of God? We can do so by cooperating with God in seeking and saving that which was lost. There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over the ninety and nine who need no repentance. Shall we not cooperate with heavenly angels in the work of saving fallen humanity? {SSW, January 1, 1896 par. 5}