



"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

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THE CONVERSION OF CRISPUS

The book of Acts is where we read about the early days of the church. It is also where we find examples on how to become a Christian. The most common illustrations used by preachers are the conversions of Pentecost (Acts 2), Samaria and Simon (Acts 8:4-13), the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40), Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1-20), Cornelius (Acts 10), Lydia (Acts 16:13-15), and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:23-34). But few people ever use the example of Crispus. His conversion coincides with the beginning of the church at Corinth.

During his second missionary journey, Paul had just finished preaching his "Mars' Hill sermon" in Athens (Acts 17). His next stop would be

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the city of Corinth. Noted for its idolatry and immorality, Corinth was an appropriate place to preach the gospel of Christ. So the Apostle Paul headed straight to the nearest synagogue. He knew that the Jews assembled there every Saturday, along with some of the resident Greeks. What an opportunity that lay before Paul! Here was a chance to preach to the multitudes who needed Christ so dearly. And he did! *"And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks."*(Acts 18:4) A master of logic, Paul reasoned with the Jews and actually was able to convince some to obey the gospel. *"... Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ."*(v. 5) One of those persuaded was a man named Crispus.

"And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."(Acts 18:8) The fact that Crispus *"believed on the Lord"* shows that he realized the importance and the requirement of faith in his life. *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* (Heb. 11:6) To become converted today, a person must likewise believe in Christ or that person will die in his sins. Jesus attested to this when he stated in John 8:24, *"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."* That is the reason why Paul and Silas told the Philippian jailer, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."*(Acts 16:31)

But how did Crispus go about in establishing the belief that Jesus is the Christ? It did not happen overnight. How did he acquire the necessary faith? Romans 10:17 tells us, *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by*

the word of God." Yes, Crispus had to hear the Gospel before he could truly believe that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God". And this is where the apostle Paul became an important factor in the conversion of this Jewish leader.

Crispus was chief ruler of the synagogue at Corinth. According to The Life And Times of Jesus the Messiah, Vol. 1, p.439 by Alfred Edersheim, the chief ruler "would have the superintendence of Divine service, and, as this was not conducted by regular officials, he would in each case determine who were to be called up to read from the Law and the Prophets, who was to conduct the prayers, and act as ... messenger of the congregation, and who, if any, was to deliver an address. He would also see to it that nothing improper took place in the Synagogue, and that the prayers were properly conducted. In short, the supreme care, both of the services and of the building, would devolve upon him." Now that we understand some of the responsibilities of the chief ruler, it is obvious that it was Crispus who permitted Paul to speak in the synagogue. It was then that this religious leader truly heard the Word of God. *"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"* (Rom. 10:14) In the case of Crispus, Paul was the preacher as he fulfilled the purpose God had intended for him from the beginning. Notice what God told Ananias concerning Paul in Acts 9:15, *"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."* That is exactly what Paul was doing in the synagogue at Corinth. Today, shouldn't we likewise be preaching the Word so that others may hear?

Thus, with the help of Paul, Crispus took the first steps in the plan of salvation. *"Verily,*

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verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24) However, Crispus was not the only one in the synagogue who heard and then believed the things Paul preached. So did "all his house" (those of his household) and "many of the Corinthians".

At this point Paul realized that Crispus and the Corinthians were not yet fully converted. Just as Peter told the people on the day of Pentecost to "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"(Acts 2:38), Paul also commanded the Corinthians "to be baptized in the name of the Lord"(Acts 10:48). The last phrase of Acts 18:8 shows that they indeed were baptized! We find this to be true of all those who chose to become Christians as seen by the many examples found throughout the book of Acts. This is in accordance with the charge Jesus gave to His disciples in Mark 16:15-16, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

In baptism today we are immersed under water, symbolizing a burial with Christ. As we come up out of the water, we are resurrected with

Him to live a new life. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:4) It is our submission to this symbol that truly makes one a child of God, "the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us" (1 Pet. 3:21).

If you have never obeyed the Gospel, consider the grave danger that awaits. When Jesus comes again, He will take "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:8). It is not enough to just believe in God. We must do his every command: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21) It is not wise to follow what other men say or think or feel. Instead, we must obey God: "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29). Only Christ can save you: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) Today will you let Him lead you gently to that heavenly home?

RAY McMANUS

FROM THE SCRIPTURES ...

1 CORINTHIANS 13

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; -

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

AS THE MANNER OF SOME IS

(A Series to Promote Church Attendance)

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10)

Carefully study the message contained in this verse of scripture. It plainly states that every single person (no exceptions) will be judged and will receive accordingly. For the bad deeds that have been done, we will be deservedly punished. For the good deeds done, we will be justly rewarded.

Now, what do you think a person will receive for intentionally skipping church services? Will it be a good reward? It does not seem probable, but some people must think so because they keep right on missing services without a second thought to it. They just do not seem to care what the Lord thinks.

Brethren, we cannot act surprised at the judgment seat of Christ because He has already warned us in His word. He specifically states

in Heb. 10:24-25, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." We must remember to do good deeds at all times. It will affect our final destination! Therefore, let us encourage one another to attend the church services more often. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men"(2 Cor. 5:11).

RAY

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Last month a brother in Christ told me he used one of the articles in a previous issue for a sermon. How pleasing it was to hear that! Whenever I can be an aid in spreading the Word of God, I am merely doing my duty to Christ. It will always be the intent of this paper to proclaim the "Good News" to all who will receive it. Anytime an article can be used to further the cause of Christ, permission is joyfully granted. I am sure that I speak for all others who have contributed to The Harvester.

Many have expressed enjoyment and extended their compliments concerning this paper. Such words of encouragement are greatly appreciated. However, I could use more articles from the brethren to be published. Surely there are some who could share a thought or two with our readers. A person does not have to be a man with "five talents" to write. Usually it is the "one talent" man who does the best job in expressing the Gospel in its purest and simplest form. If you can send in an article of any length, it would be most helpful. Please don't waste this excellent opportunity to reach souls with the Word of God.

Ray]

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place & Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
August 3-8	Carrville Church Carrville, AL	Mark Parkhurst (McMinnville, TN)
August 10-15 (Su-F)	Rainsville Church Rainsville, AL 7:00 each evening	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
August 10-16 (Su-Sa)	West Point Church West Point, GA 7:30 pm EST	local brethren
August 10-16	Oak Valley Church Colquitt, GA	Lindeal Greer (Bogue Chitto, MS)
August 17-23 (Su-Sa)	Sylacauga Church Sylacauga, AL 7:00 each evening	Mark Parkhurst (McMinnville, TN)
Sept. 1-6	West Gadsden Church Gadsden, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Sept. 12-14 (F-Su)	Godby Road Church Atlanta, Ga 7:30 pm EST	Terry Newell (Earlsboro, OK)
Sept. 14-19	Estesburg Church near Somerset, KY	V. W. Boland (Gadsden, AL)
Sept. 14-19	Carter Street Church Ashland, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Sept. 21-28	Marlow Church Marlow, OK	Pat Mannon (Huntsville, AR)

REMEMBER: If your congregation is having a Gospel meeting, why not advertise it through this paper for free? Just send in the appropriate information at least 1½ months in advance.