

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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The Ox Law

And if an ox gore a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be surely stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. But if the ox was wont to gore in time past, and it hath been testified to its owner, and he hath not kept it in, but it hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death. (Ex. 21: 28-29).

The Old Testament OX Law emphasizes the responsibility of those who own, promote or control that which has great potential. The danger in that which is powerful is not a valid argument against growth, but we have a responsibility to others to control that power. Should our ox inadvertently gore, the ox shall be stoned, but we are free. We must take no profit (flesh) from that proven evil.

But some things show a tendency to go astray — their history is a record of bloody warnings; and when it hath been testified that our pet ox was wont to gore, what then? Shall we ridicule him who warns as a self-appointed watchman lacking in love?

There are poorly informed, over-zealous watchmen, but there are far more willfully ignorant people. History may be abused and the fallacy of generalization may lead us to false conclusions; but he is foolish indeed who ignores the records. In the absence of fore-sight, we must use all available hind-sight to profit.

Why would anyone, made aware of a proven danger, fail to curb this ox? Two most obvious reasons are selfish pride and indifference to others. One may contend the end justifies the means, but his plea is smothered in the decree of divine justice. While he boasts of the good done, the Lord is looking at the remains of his neighbor, impaled upon the cruel horn of his instrument for doing. (Rom. 3:8)

The ox shall be stoned AND ITS OWNER ALSO SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH.

God shall destroy the instrument for wrong-doing, but He will not stop there. God shall not hold guiltless those who ignore valid warnings, and promote, encourage and profit by that which was wont to gore. Brother, have you an ox that needs corralling?

- Robert F. Turner, *Plain Talk*, February, 1972

Expressions & Impressions

Are you approachable? It is likely each of us can say, "Yes, I am approachable. Why do you ask?" It was not long ago that I heard a sister say to the preacher, "You're approachable." This is an interesting remark. Is the case that some in the congregation, perhaps Bible class teachers, other saints, elders are not? Perhaps. On the other hand, maybe all that was meant is the preacher is approachable and easy to talk to.

Are you judgmental? Some time back, a good way in fact, I heard a person say of an elder, "He is judgmental!" The context of that remark had to do with "Let us not approach him lest we be given a judgmental lecture about how we have done this or that wrong." The idea behind the word "judgmental" is negative in just about every use of the word. We all have a standard by which we live and judge. Most of the time the standard is of our own making, but the standard by which we live and judge is to be the Lord's. Then, putting that into practice, we form our opinions along with our experiences into a firm decree by which we live. When that decree by which I live is compelled on another person without them asking for it, I become judgmental. I have learned long ago this is a recipe for separation.

Again, not too long ago, I heard a brother say that when something was introduced into his mind, say some failings or struggle that belongs to a particular saint, the brother who is told this information – told because there is a desire to receive help to overcome – the brother told now can't get the impression from the mind. Consequently, whenever the struggling one presents him or herself to the preacher, the impression made is the only image seen. The preacher now has to get over the hurdle to be of any help, while the one needing help does not realize the extra height that needs to be scaled.

Have you come across a saint who mumbles much, says nothing in the mumbling worth hearing, but is judgmental in the saying of it? I have. Rather disappointing. Murmuring/mumbling destroyed the nation of Israel (1 Cor. 10:9-10) and it destroys the saint who engages in the same.

This goes a long way to solving all of the above: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are

pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

Each of us should put it into practice.

- Ron Thomas

CONVERSION

The term "conversion" is often misused and abused by many who have not been careful to retain the definition that inspired men intended. It is not uncommon to hear the term "conversion" used in a way that perverts gospel truth. For example, you might hear someone say, "I have been converted, but I have not yet been baptized." In view of statements like this, we are benefitted by knowing what conversion is in the New Testament.

Generally, the word "convert" means "to turn" or "to change." When oil is converted to gasoline it is "changed" or "turned" into gasoline. Water is converted to steam, corn is converted to meal, milk is converted to butter - all these processes "change" one substance into another. The same is true when the word is used in a spiritual sense. When one is "converted" he is "changed" or "turned" from a servant of Satan to a servant of God. This "conversion" may involve one or more things to complete the process, but however many things are necessary, the conversion is incomplete if one should fail to meet ALL of the necessary conditions! If any of the steps of converting oil to gasoline were left out, the resulting product would not be gasoline. Similarly, and in the spiritual sense, not one necessary thing in the conversion process can be left out if conversion is to be complete. We certainly want to be converted, for Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted (turn - ASV), and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:3 - KJV).

James 5:19-20 shows that a brother can err from the truth. The procedure encouraged by James is designed to "save a soul from death, and ... cover a multitude of sins." The procedure is called CONVERTING. Thus "converteth" is a term used to sum up all that is necessary to transfer one from error, spiritual death, and sins (kingdom of Satan - Matt. 12:26), to truth, spiritual life, and forgiveness (Kingdom of Christ - Col. 1:13). The scriptures are totally sufficient to accomplish conversion: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul:" (Psa. 19:7).

We have noted that the term "conversion" is used in a general sense to indicate all that is necessary to change a sinner into a saved person. However, there are some passages

that use the term in a more limited and specific sense. Some Christians who were "scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen" went to Antioch and preached Christ. "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord." (Acts 11:21). Since being converted is the same as turning to Christ, the terms may be used interchangeably. Notice that they believed AND turned; their turning was not their belief, but was something done in addition to their belief, and which followed their belief. Following some modern preachers, one would get the idea that conversion refers to belief only or faith only, preceded by nothing, followed by nothing. This is one passage which proves that notion false! Their belief AND turning to the Lord made them Christians (Acts 11:26).

Not only does turning to the Lord follow belief, it also follows repentance. Peter's sermon in Acts 3 indicates such: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted (turn again - ASV), that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;" (Acts 3:19). Notice that they were to repent AND be converted; their being converted was not their repentance, but was something done in addition to their repentance, and which followed their repentance. The same is true in Paul's declaration to king Agrippa regarding the content of his preaching: "... that they should repent and turn to God ..." (Acts 26:20).

What was it that followed belief and repentance that brought salvation? By comparing the passages we have noted with other parallel passages we can see what the Bible actually teaches. Acts 18:8 gives the result of preaching in the city of Corinth: "... and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." Their being baptized was not their believing, but followed their believing and wrought their salvation just as Jesus said it would in Mark 16:16 -- "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;...". Recorded in Acts 2:38 are the apostle Peter's instructions to the sinful Jews on Pentecost: "... Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Notice the comparison of this verse with Acts 3:19:

Acts 2:38 - Repent - be baptized –	unto the remission –	Ye shall
	of your sins	receive
		the gift of
		the Holy Spirit
Acts 3:19 – Repent -	turn again -	that your sins –
	(be converted)	may be
		blotted out
		so there may
		come seasons
		of refreshing

We can easily see that "be baptized" corresponds with "be converted." Therefore the conversion that follows belief and repentance refers to baptism. And when "conversion" is used in a general sense it certainly includes baptism. In whatever sense the term conversion is used it at least refers to baptism. One who says that he has been converted but has never been baptized is **WRONG ABOUT HIS CONVERSION** according to the Bible! Friend, is your conversion complete? May we assist you in being converted?

- Gary Smalley

> "Never give the devil a ride! He will always want to drive!"

> "We don't change the message, the message changes us!"

> "It is easier to preach ten sermons than it is to live one!"

> "If God is your co-pilot, swap seats!"

> "I would rather live my life as if there is a God, and die to find out there isn't, than live my life as if there isn't, and die to find out there is!"

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*The Amazing Mercy of God!*" (Text: Eph. 2:4-7); Sunday evening: "*The Failure of Moses!*" (Num. 20).