

The Unconverted Elect

- A. convert: To turn in position or direction.
- B. Conversion requires Scripture and teaching. **PSA 19:7; 51:13.**
- C. Conversion involves *seeing, hearing and understanding*, which requires regeneration. **MAT 13:15; JOH 8:43, 47; 1CO 2:14.**
- D. Consider some examples of the conversion of already born-again (regenerated) persons. **LUK 22:32 c/w MAT 16:16 c/w 1JO 5:1; JAM 5:19-20.**
- E. The unconverted elect may be categorized thus:
 - 1. Those not yet regenerated, and therefore unable to be converted.
 - 2. Those regenerated, but not knowing Scripture, the means of conversion.
 - 3. Those regenerated, but who do not believe or obey Scripture when taught.
 - 4. Those regenerated, converted by the Scripture, but later fall away. Perhaps a better term for these would be DEconverted elect.
 - a. Of these, some may be reconverted to faith, obedience and fellowship.
 - b. Of these, some may die in their error, yet still have eternal life.
- F. Consider these examples of unconverted elect children of God.
 - 1. Cornelius. **ACTS 10 & 11.**
 - a. He feared, gave alms and prayed to God *before* hearing the gospel. **ACT 10:1.**
 - b. His prayers and alms-giving were accepted by God *before* he heard the gospel. **ACT 10:4; 1PE 3:12; PRO 15:8.**
 - c. He worked righteousness *before* he heard the gospel, demonstrating that he was already righteous, born of God, and accepted with God. **ACT 10:35; 1JO 2:29; 3:7.**
 - d. God *regenerated* Cornelius *without* Peter and the gospel.
 - e. God *converted* Cornelius *with* Peter and the gospel.
 - f. His works before the gospel evidenced his regeneration.
 - g. His faith was the firstfruits of his conversion to the gospel.
 - h. His conversion brought forth more righteous works.
 - i. Commenting on Cornelius' conversion, John Calvin noted, "The case of Paul we admit, but we hold that they are in error as to Cornelius; for it appears that he was already enlightened and regenerated [before Peter's arrival], so that all which he wanted was a clear revelation of the Gospel."
(*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, B3.24.10:1, brackets mine--TB)
 - 2. Solomon.
 - a. Solomon was an elect, chosen son of God. **1CH 28:6.**
 - b. Solomon was a prophet who wrote Scripture.
 - c. Such prophets were *holy men of God*. **2PE 1:21.**
 - d. Solomon embraced heathen religion and no clear evidence of his recovery is ever recorded. **1KI 11:1-43.**
 - e. The O.T. prophets and N.T. saints are perfected together. **HEB 11:32, 40.**
 - f. All of the prophets will be seen in the kingdom of God. **LUK 13:28.**
 - g. Though Solomon was not faithful to God's word, God was faithful to Himself in His covenant to save Solomon. c/w **2TI 2:13.**
 - 3. Israel in the wilderness. **1CO 10:1-6 c/w JUDE 1:5.**
 - a. Contrast **vs. 3-4** with **HEB 9:1-10 c/w JOH 6:32.**
 - (1) They were all partakers of *spiritual* meat and drink, i.e., Jesus Christ.
 - (2) The elements of tabernacle service and the daily manna were physical, carnal and worldly, not spiritual.

- b. **JOH 6:54-56.** Such as these have eternal life. They are secure. **JOH 10:28-29.**
- c. **HEB 3:7-11, 15 - 4:2.** These were children of God who died because of *unbelief of the gospel!* Some had been slain at Sinai before the “wandering” judgment. **EXO 32:27-28.**
- d. Some say that the fact that these people did not make it into the promised land is proof that they were never children of God to start with.
 - (1) Moses died in the wilderness because of unbelief also. **NUM 20:12.**
 - (2) Moses is in glory. **LUK 9:30-31.**
- e. **HEB 11:29** includes them in the roll call of *faith which evidences righteousness.*
- f. If those Israelites who died in the wilderness because of unbelief of the gospel *were NOT* children of God, what would be the relevancy of this example to N.T. church members at Corinth who *were* children of God? **1CO 10:6.**
- g. Those Israelites of **1CO 10:1-6** were God's children whose faith deteriorated and so lost their lives as a result of unbelief.
- h. The LORD judges and takes vengeance on HIS people. **HEB 10:30-31.**
- 4. Certain godly Gentiles who have not the law. **ROM 2:13-15.**
 - a. **v. 13. justify:** To show (a person or action) to be just or right; to prove or maintain the righteousness or innocence of. (c/w **1JO 3:7**).
 - b. **v. 14.** These Gentiles *have not the law*, which in context is the Scripture, which the Jews did have. **ROM 3:1-2.**
 - c. These Gentiles thus lack the very thing required for conversion. **PSA 19:7.**
 - d. **vs. 14-15.** Yet, these Gentiles do the things contained in the law. They have not the law written in stone or on paper, but in their hearts. They obey from a lively *inward* nature.
 - e. They are obviously beneficiaries of the New Covenant. **HEB 8:10-13.**
 - f. Cornelius would have been one of these before his conversion.
 - g. Note Paul's conclusion in **ROM 2:26-29.** These Gentiles are Jews inwardly as evidenced by their keeping the law from a lively inward principle.
- 5. An elect, disobedient portion of post-Christ natural Israel. **ROM 11:25-27.**
 - a. In context, two groups are under consideration in Israel: the nation as a whole and the elect portion within the nation. **ROM 11:1-7.**
 - b. The non-elect, natural Israelites are blinded ALWAYS. **vs. 7-10.**
 - c. Of the elect portion of the nation, there are two groups.
 - (1) Some, like the apostles and early church members were believing converts. **ACT 21:20.**
 - (2) Others of elect Israel are under a TEMPORARY judicial blindness *UNTIL the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.* (**v. 25**).
 - (3) The times of the Gentiles are the LAST times (**1CO 10:11; HEB 1:1-2; 1JO 2:18**). The blindness of all the unbelieving, elect portion of Israel will terminate at the coming of Christ.
 - (4) This is how *all Israel shall be saved* (**ROM 11:26**), understanding that only the elect portion of the sons of Abraham are of the true Israel but only some of them will be converted to Christ before He returns.
 - d. However, the unbelieving elect portion of natural Israel are not converted to the gospel, but OPPOSING it. **ROM 11:28.**
 - (1) Yet, God still has a covenant of redemption with them that He will honor.
 - (2) He will not repent of His work of grace. **EPH 1:7; ROM 11:27-29.**
- 6. The rich young ruler. **MAR 10:17-22.**
 - a. Compare “loved” in **v. 21** with **JOH 13:1** and **ROM 8:35-39**. This man was loved

of Christ and as such was one of His own.

- b. This man did not follow Christ. He was unconverted and Scripture nowhere teaches that he was converted before death. The argument from silence applies. Do not add what is not there!

7. The people at the cross for whom the Savior prayed. **LUK 23:34-48.**

- a. There were three groups of people at the cross: the people beholding, the rulers with them, and also the soldiers. They were all mocking Christ, obviously unconverted.
- b. Jesus prayed for forgiveness: "Father, forgive THEM..." There were clearly unconverted people there for whom Jesus made intercession. **ISA 53:12.**
- c. God always heard Jesus' prayers. **JOH 11:41-42.**
- d. Therefore, the people Jesus prayed for were forgiven. Consider the following facts regarding forgiveness:
 - (1) **EPH 1:4, 7.** Those chosen in Christ are the ones who have forgiveness. Therefore, those forgiven at the cross are Christ's elect.
 - (2) **PSA 130:8; COL 2:13.** God's forgiveness extends to *all iniquities*. All of the sins of these people are forgiven in eternity.
 - (3) **ROM 8:33-34.** Being elect of God, no charge can be laid to their account eternally. They are justified and eternally secure.
- e. Scripture says nothing about all of these people being converted later in their lives. What the Bible does not teach, it does not teach!

G. The people in the above examples are known to be God's elect by the testimony of Scripture. Our names are not included. We cannot use these examples of disobedience overruled by grace to justify our own disobedience. Grace teaches otherwise. **TIT 2:11-14; EPH 2:10.**

- 1. **JUDE 1:4; ROM 3:8.** These texts apply to any who would use the fact of unconverted elect to justify their own sin.
- 2. **2TH 1:8-9; ROM 2:6-9.** How does one know these texts don't apply to him if he is an unbeliever?
- 3. Assurance of election unto life comes by faith and obedience. **1JO 5:1, 13; 2PE 1:5-10.**

H. **"FOR WHOM DID CHRIST DIE?"** "The Father imposed His wrath due unto, and the Son underwent punishment for, either: 1. All the sins of all men. 2. All the sins of some men, or 3. Some of the sins of all men. In which case it may be said: a. That if the last be true, all men have some sins to answer for, and so none are saved. b. That if the second be true, then Christ, in their stead suffered for all the sins of all the elect in the whole world, and this is the truth c. But if the first be the case, why are not all men free from the punishment due unto their sins?"

"You answer, Because of unbelief. I ask, is this unbelief a sin, or is it not? If it be, then Christ suffered the punishment due unto it, or He did not. If He did, why must that hinder them more than their other sins for which He died? If He did not, He did not die for all their sins!"
(Dr. John Owen, Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell and Vice Chancellor of Oxford University)