

## New Testament Conversions – No. 9

### Conversions in Corinth

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It was the apostle Paul's custom upon entering a city where he had previously not been to seek out the Jewish populace first and reason with them about Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. Such was the case in Corinth where Paul preached every sabbath in the synagogue seeking to persuade both Jews and interested Greeks who assemble there that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:4). When the prejudiced Jews would no longer hear him, Paul told them they were no longer worthy to hear the Gospel and he removed himself from the synagogue, turning to the Gentiles (Acts 18:5-7). The earliest fruits of his labors in Corinth are documented in Acts 18:8: "And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized." This one verse tells us what the people were told to do to be saved, what they did to be saved, and how the church in Corinth began. We may observe the following:

1. Paul taught these people just what Christ had commanded the apostles to teach when they went into all the world: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16). They were to preach the Gospel so that men could hear what to do to be saved. The Gospel included the good news that salvation was available **and** the terms upon which it was available. These terms included **belief** in the message (which included belief in Christ as God's Son, the only Savior), and **baptism** (immersion in water: John 3:5; Acts 8:36; 10:47; Eph 5:26), whereupon they were saved from their sins through the blood of Christ. The Corinthians made precisely the response to the Gospel upon which Jesus promised salvation: "Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).
2. The last phrase of Acts 18:8 serves as an inspired commentary on the first phrase, which says that Crispus "believed in the Lord with all his house." Unless Paul preached two different plans of salvation in Corinth, Crispus did exactly what the rest of the Corinthians did to be saved: they heard the Gospel, believed, and were baptized. Is there any evidence that Crispus did more than merely believe? Yes. Paul plainly says he baptized Crispus (1 Cor. 1:14). The conclusion is irresistible that Luke uses the phrase, "believed in the Lord" to mean exactly what the rest of the Corinthians did to be saved, namely believing, and being baptized. In the study of the Philippian jailer's conversion Luke definitely stated that the jailer had demonstrated his belief in God and rejoiced greatly after being baptized (Acts 16:33-34). Let none point to Crispus in Corinth and use him as an example of a man saved by "faith only." He indeed was saved by faith, but by a faith that did not hesitate at the Gospel command to be baptized for remission of sins. The only kind of saving faith taught

in the Scriptures is a faith that works in obedience to God's commands in a spirit of love  
(Gal. 5:6; Jam. 2:17-24).

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