

## Essentials To Conversion: Hearing The Word

There are those who say for a man to be saved he must be acted upon by the Holy Spirit, Who bestows faith. However, the Bible teaches one must hear the gospel of Christ in order to develop faith. "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). This is why Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel" (Mk. 16:15).

The inspired word of God reveals the essentially of hearing in order for faith to be developed. The Lord taught such in the parable of the sower. "The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved" (Lk. 8:11-12). Notice, the explanation was not, "The seed is the Holy Spirit...then comes the devil and takes away the Holy Spirit out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." This is even true of Pentecost. The apostles received the Holy Spirit and began to teach (Acts 1:26-2:4). After some confusion on the part of the crowd, the Bible says, "Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words'" (Acts 2:14). Thus, Peter taught the people.

Further, some will object and cite Saul of Tarsus or Cornelius as examples of God acting directly upon a man. However, in both cases, the sinner was instructed by another man on God's plan of salvation (Acts 9:6, 10-19; 10:5-6, 34-48). Especially note Acts 11:14, as Peter quotes Cornelius, "who [Peter] will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved."

The New Testament of Jesus Christ reveals the gospel is God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). It is the word of God that produces faith within a man. In the first century this word was revealed through the apostles and prophets; now it is preserved for us in the Bible (Heb. 2:3-4). Hence, one seeking salvation must first hear the word, from which faith in Christ is produced (cf. Jn. 8:24).

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