

Converts: The Mysterious Triune Meaning of the Original Hebrew Word

Discover Your Spiritual Identity: The Revelation of the Names and Titles God Has Given His People

“Zion shall be redeemed with justice and her converts with righteousness” (Isa. 1:2).

Though the word “converts” is used quite often in Christian theology and conversation, it is only found one time in the Word of God. The original Hebrew word is *shub* and it has a mysterious triune meaning—to turn away from, to turn toward and to return. In many other places in the Old Testament, *shub* is actually translated “turn” and “return” such as the following passages:

First, it is used in the sense of “turning away” from evil:

“As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why will you die, O house of Israel?” (Ezek. 33:11).

Second, it is used in the sense of turning toward God:

“All the ends of the world will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will worship before You” (Ps. 22:27).

Finally, it is used in the sense of “returning” to a relationship with Him that is right:

“Yet even now, declares the Lord, return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting and with weeping and with mourning” (Joel 2:12).

Moses is a prime example under the Old Covenant. When he was “converted” from his former life, he first “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter” (he turned away from sin); then, “choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a time. He esteemed the reproach of Christ as greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he looked to the reward” (he turned toward God). Finally, he forsook Egypt” and “he kept the Passover” (he returned to a relationship with the God of Abraham and led the Israelites to do the same thing) (Heb. 11:24-28 excerpts).

Like many other biblical examples, this shows that conversion is not an act of God like salvation, regeneration, justification, sanctification and redemption. Conversion is primarily an act of man, as is repentance and faith. We are required to do our part; then God is faithful to do His!

First, we turn away from sin with a spirit of repentance in our hearts; second, we turn toward God with a spirit of faith. Third, in doing so, we return to a right relationship with Him. Then He intervenes and graciously saves, regenerates, justifies, sanctifies and redeems.

Of course, it is also true that no person can truly repent, believe or be converted unless God grants him the grace to do so. Romans 2:4 reveals that the “goodness of God” leads us to repentance, and Ephesians 2:8 indicates that saving faith is “the gift of God ... so that no one should boast.” Therefore, in the end, all the glory and all the credit should return to the grace-giver and the gift-giver Himself.

This dependency on God is found in the writings of Jeremiah, who admitted that he (along with the Israelite nation) was like “an untrained calf,” but he pled with God, “turn me back and I will be turned, for you are the Lord my God” (Jer. 31:18). In other words, he was saying, “We can’t change, the way we need to change, without Your help, God.”

The Two Main Means of Conversion

God uses two main supernatural influences in assisting us to make this sacred transition in our lives, as indicated by the following verses:

- The Word. “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul” (Ps. 19:7).
- The Spirit. “Turn at My rebuke; surely I will pour My Spirit on you; I will make My words known to you” (Prov. 1:23).

By the Word and the Spirit, God turns our lives around and gets us moving the right direction.

Jesus verified the Holy Spirit’s involvement in the following powerful passage:

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. When He comes, He will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I am going to My Father, and you will see Me no more; and of judgment, because the ruler of this world stands condemned” (John 16:7-11).

In other words, by convicting us, the Holy Spirit helps us turn away from sin, then turn toward the Lord Jesus (taking Him as our example of how to live righteously). Then finally, He helps us return to God in the full assurance that the enemy of our souls has been judged and condemned, so we are free to become one with our heavenly Father once again. That’s what conversion is all about. It will culminate in a grand conclusion, being converted from earthbound, carnal, cursed sons and daughters of Adam to eternal, resurrected, glorified sons and daughters of the Most High God. Praise God!

On *Discover Your Spiritual Identity* on Charisma Podcast

Network, Mike Shreve goes even deeper into this powerful insight as he teaches on *God Calls His People Converts (Miraculous Metamorphosis)*. Next week, in part two of this subject, you will find out the mystery of the meaning of “Zion” and how true converts are called to be contagious.
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Mike Shreve has taught on the spiritual identity of believers for over 30 years. This powerful revelation is featured on his weekly podcast on and a weekly TV program on “It’s Supernatural Network” (ISN)—both titled Discover Your Spiritual Identity (also posted weekly on YouTube here). It is also the theme of his Charisma House book titled WHO AM I? Dynamic Declarations of Who You Are in Christ. A product of the Jesus movement era, Mike has traveled evangelistically in the United States and overseas since 1970 with an added emphasis on healing and the prophetic.

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