

Examples of Conversion

By Pastor Harry Richardson

Scripture gives examples of individuals and peoples who have turned to God in conversion.

Examples of conversion in the OT

Peoples who turned to God

[Is 19:22](#) Egypt; [Jon 3:5–10](#) Nineveh

Isaiah 19:22 (NASB95) — 22 The LORD will strike Egypt, striking but healing; so they will return to the LORD, and He will respond to them and will heal them.

Jonah 3:5–10 (NASB95) — 5 Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them. **6** When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth and sat on the ashes. **7** He issued a proclamation and it said, “In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. **8** “But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands. **9** “Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish.” **10** When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.

Individuals who turned to God

[2 Ki 5:15](#) Naaman; [2 Ch 33:12–13](#) Manasseh; [Da 4:34–37](#) Nebuchadnezzar; [Jon 1:16](#) sailors on board ship with Jonah

2 Kings 5:15 (NASB95) — 15 When he returned to the man of God with all his company, and came and stood before him, he said, “Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel; so please take a present from your servant now.”

2 Chronicles 33:12–13 (NASB95) — 12 When he was in distress, he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. **13** When he prayed to Him, He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.

Daniel 4:34–37 (NASB95) — 34 “But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. **35** “All the

inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?' **36** "At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. **37** "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

Jonah 1:16 (NASB95) — 16 Then the men feared the LORD greatly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

Examples of conversion in the NT

Examples of people in general

[Jn 4:42](#) people of Sychar; [Ac 2:41](#) 3,000 people on the day of Pentecost; [Ac 8:12](#) Samaritans; [Ac 9:35](#) people of Lydda and Sharon; [Ac 15:3](#) Gentile converts

John 4:42 (NASB95) — 42 and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

Acts 2:41 (NASB95) — 41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

Acts 8:12 (NASB95) — 12 But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

Acts 9:35 (NASB95) — 35 And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

Acts 15:3 (NASB95) — 3 Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren.

Examples of individual converts

[Lk 15:18](#) the prodigal son; [Lk 19:8–9](#) Zacchaeus; [Ac 8:35–38](#) the Ethiopian eunuch

Luke 15:18 (NASB95) — 18 'I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight;

Luke 19:8–9 (NASB95) — **8** Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.” **9** And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.

Acts 8:35–38 (NASB95) — **35** Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. **36** As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” **37** And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” **38** And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him.

Paul:

[Ac 9:3–18](#)

Acts 9:3–18 (NASB95) — **3** As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; **4** and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” **5** And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” And He said, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, **6** but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.” **7** The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. **8** Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. **9** And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. **10** Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” **11** And the Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, **12** and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.” **13** But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; **14** and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.” **15** But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; **16** for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.” **17** So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy

Spirit.” **18** And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized;

[Ac 10:44–48](#) Cornelius; [Ac 13:12](#) the proconsul, Sergius Paulus; [Ac 16:14–15](#) Lydia; [Ac 16:29–34](#) the Philippian jailer

Acts 10:44–48 (NASB95) — 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. **45** All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. **46** For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, **47** “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?” **48** And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

Acts 13:12 (NASB95) — 12 Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord.

Acts 16:14–15 (NASB95) — 14 A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. **15** And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.

Acts 16:29–34 (NASB95) — 29 And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, **30** and after he brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” **31** They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” **32** And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. **33** And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. **34** And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.

Israel’s turning back to God

[Ho 3:5](#)

Hosea 3:5 (NASB95) — 5 Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the last days.

See also [Je 50:4–5](#); [Ho 11:10–11](#); [Ro 11:26](#)

Jeremiah 50:4–5 (NASB95) — 4 “In those days and at that time,” declares the LORD, “the sons of Israel will come, both they and the sons of Judah as well; they will go along weeping as they go, and it will be the LORD their God they will seek. **5** “They will ask for the way to Zion, turning their faces in its direction; they will come that they may join themselves to the LORD in an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten.

Hosea 11:10–11 (NASB95) — 10 They will walk after the LORD, He will roar like a lion; Indeed He will roar And His sons will come trembling from the west. **11** They will come trembling like birds from Egypt And like doves from the land of Assyria; And I will settle them in their houses, declares the LORD.

Romans 11:26 (NASB95) — 26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”

The conversion of the nations

[Je 16:19](#)

Jeremiah 16:19 (NASB95) — 19 O LORD, my strength and my stronghold, And my refuge in the day of distress, To You the nations will come From the ends of the earth and say, “Our fathers have inherited nothing but falsehood, Futility and things of no profit.”

See also [Ps 22:27–28](#); [Is 2:3](#); [Zec 14:16](#)

Psalms 22:27–28 (NASB95) — 27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, And all the families of the nations will worship before You. **28** For the kingdom is the LORD’S And He rules over the nations.

Isaiah 2:3 (NASB95) — 3 And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Zechariah 14:16 (NASB95) — 16 Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.