



**Distinguishing Marks
of a Saving Work of God,
Part 3**

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

REVIEW: Distinguishing Marks of a Saving Work of God (1 Thess 1:2-8)

A Saving Work of God Is . . .

- 1. Revealed by the practical display of supernatural virtues (1:3).**
- 2. Originated by an unconditional act of divine love (1:4).**
- 3. Implemented by the faithful proclamation of gospel truth (1:5).**
- 4. Recognized by a devoted imitation of faithful leaders (1:6).**
- 5. Confirmed by a compelling example to other believers (1:7-8).**

6. It is acknowledged by a public affirmation of a definitive conversion (1:9-10).

“For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols” (v. 9).

- “They themselves” = other believers in Macedonia and Achaia (vv. 7-8), in contrast to the missionaries (v. 8).
- “Report” = “to give an account, announce, declare.”

- This “reporting” focused on two activities—both of which describe the same basic event.

“For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols” (v. 9).

- 1) The remarkable nature of missionaries’ ministry to the Thessalonians.
- 2) The remarkable nature of the Thessalonians’ response to the missionaries.

“how you turned to God from idols” (v. 9).

- “You turned” – ἐπιστρέφω – “to turn around.”
- Paul describes *genuine conversion* as comprised of **TWO INGREDIENTS:**
 - 1) A turn *from* something (“idols”) – a recognition of the inherent vanity of the things of this world.
 - 2) A turn *to* something (“God”) – a recognition of the inherent value of the God of the gospel.

CONVERSION

A Turn Away
"Repentance"
(renouncing)



A Turn Toward
"Faith"
(embracing)

- **Acts 14:15** – “Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God.”
- **2 Corinthians 3:15-16** – “But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.”

“Becoming a Christian involves a very definite break with non-Christian habits.

Whatever the believers’ previous background, there must always be a turning from idols of some sort. The act of conversion involves a change of direction of the will. This is a decisive happening, a reorientation of the whole life. . . .



“There was no attempt to find a place for Christ in the polytheistic milieu. Such an idea was preposterous. No matter how greatly their



habitual practices had to be changed, the Christians of the first century saw that there could be no place for an idol alongside Christ.”

—Leon Morris, *First & Second Thessalonians*, 53

“Repentance is the hand releasing those filthy objects it had previously clung to so tenaciously. Faith is extending an empty hand to God to receive His gift of grace. Repentance is a godly sorrow for sin. Faith is receiving a sinner’s Savior. Repentance is revulsion of the filth and pollution of sin. Faith is a seeking of cleansing therefrom. Repentance is the sinner covering his mouth and crying, ‘Unclean, unclean!’ Faith is the leper coming to Christ and saying, ‘Lord, if You will, You can make me clean.’”

—A. W. Pink, “A Fourfold Salvation”

Was I converted?

Did I turn from the idols of sin, self, and self-righteousness—denouncing it all as worthless?

Did I turn to the God revealed in the gospel as infinitely valuable—that He is the only One who can give me life?

Was this *publicly* evident?



***“to serve a living and true God,
and to wait for His Son from heaven” (vv. 9b-10a).***

- Paul describes *genuine conversion* as aimed at **TWO PURPOSES:**
 - 1) “to serve” - δουλεύω – “to act or conduct oneself as one in total service to another; to perform the duties of a slave, to obey.”
 - Present tense: a continuous activity.
 - The one obeyed: “a living and true God”

- **Romans 6:16-18** – “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”
- **1 Corinthians 6:19** – “For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”

*“to serve a living and true God,
and **to wait for** His Son from heaven” (vv. 9b-10a).*

2) “to wait for” - ἀναμένειν – “waiting with
patience and trust.”

- Present tense: a continuous activity.
- The one awaited: “His Son”

παρουσία

parousia / coming; advent; presence

- **1 Thessalonians 1:3** – “constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- **1 Corinthians 1:7** – “so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- **Philippians 3:20** – “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

- This awaited Son:
 - “from heaven” (v. 10a)
 - “raised from the dead” (v. 10b)
 - “Jesus” (v. 10c)
 - “rescues us from the wrath to come” (v. 10d)

Was I converted?

Am I living in total submission and obedience to God, to live for His glory as my greatest good?

Am I looking fervently to the heavens for the coming of the resurrected and ascended Jesus?

Is this *publicly* evident?



“Jesus Is Mine”

Fade, fade, each earthly joy
Jesus is mine
Stronger than fleeting hopes
Jesus is mine
Dark is the wilderness
Earth has no resting place
Jesus alone can bless
Jesus is mine

In days of fragile peace
Jesus is mine
Through tearful nights of grief
Jesus is mine
His voice commands the storm
His presence stills my soul
He will sustain my hope
Jesus is mine

When on that final day
Jesus is mine
Before his radiant face
Jesus is mine
Safe in his arms I'll cling
Praising my Savior King
Forevermore I'll sing
"Jesus is mine."

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