

SAMARIA CHURCH OF CHRIST

# Water of Life

“...the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” - John 4:14

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## WHICH WAY?

DAVID ELDRIDGE

Have you ever found yourself at an unfamiliar intersection trying to decide which road to choose? You know that if you take the right road it will lead you to your desired destination, while the wrong choice will take you further away from where you want to be. Similarly, in life we are presented a choice of two paths. We all must, and do, make a choice as to which we will take. This choice is of the greatest importance as it has eternal consequences. One way is right, leading to Heaven. The other way is wrong, leading to Hell. Which is the right way?

**MAN'S WAY?** The majority of people choose to take the way which is according to their own wisdom. However, do a man's own thoughts and feelings determine the right way? Jeremiah wrote: “O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jer. 10:23). Why does it not reside in man's faculties to determine the right way? Because, the “way that seems

right to a man...end is the way of death” (Prov. 14:12). Therefore, the one taking the way that is “right in his own eyes” is walking in “the way of a fool” (Prov. 12:15). Man's way is “a way that is not good” because it is “according to their own thoughts” – it is not the right way (Isa. 65:2).

**GOD'S WAY?** The only alternative to man's way is the Lord's way. “As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is proven” (Ps. 18:30). This perfect way is revealed to us in God's word. Our plea should ever be, “Teach me Your way, O Lord” (Ps. 86:11). Let us “ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it” and by this “find rest for your souls” (Jer. 6:16). The way of the Lord is right, and it leads to eternal life in Heaven.

God once told Israel, “Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death” (Jer. 21:8). He has done the same for us. Which way have you chosen?

# THE CONVERSION OF SAUL

DAVID ELDRIDGE

Perhaps the most dramatic example of conversion in the book of Acts is the conversion of Saul. Saul, later known as the apostle Paul, was a man who had done “many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Ac. 26:9). However, he was also a man whom the Lord showed grace and mercy. There are many things that we can learn from a study of the conversion of Saul. Notice...

**SAUL’S LIFE PRIOR TO HIS CONVERSION.** In his early life, Saul “persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it” due to his zeal for Judaism and the traditions of his fathers (Gal. 1:13-14). He consented to the death of Stephen, the first recorded martyr for Christ, and also guarded the clothes of the men who stoned Stephen to death (Ac. 22:20). Being enraged at Christians, Saul imprisoned and beat them, compelled them to blaspheme, and cast his vote for their deaths (Ac. 22:19; 26:10-11). In this way, Saul “made havoc of the church” of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ac. 8:3). Saul did these things “in all good conscience” because he was doing it “ignorantly in unbelief” (Ac. 23:1; 1 Tim. 1:13).

**SAUL’S CONVERSION.** The following events surrounding Saul’s conversion are chronicled in Acts 9, 22, and 26. At Saul’s request, he received letters authorizing him to bring Christians from Damascus

back to Jerusalem so that they could be punished. As Saul and his company neared Damascus, a light “brighter than the sun” shone around them, causing them to fall to the ground. Saul heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” Saul asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The reply was: “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.” Hearing this, Saul, “trembling and astonished, said, ‘Lord, what do You want me to do?’” The Lord instructs: “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” Having been blinded during this event, Saul’s companions led him to Damascus where for three days he did not eat or drink. A disciple in the city of Damascus named Ananias was sent by the Lord to Saul. Ananias came to him and, when he had laid his hands on him, Saul received his sight. Ananias told Saul the things he “must do”: “Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Ac. 22:16). At this command, Saul “arose and was baptized” – it was at this point he was truly converted.

Many in the religious world teach that Saul was converted during his “experience” on the road to Damascus prior to his baptism. If Saul was converted on the road to Damascus... **The Lord did not know that Saul was converted** – He told him that there were things that he “must do.” **Saul did not know that he was converted** – he was scared, blind, not eating, not drinking,

and praying continually. **Ananias did not know that Saul was converted** – he told him to be baptized to “wash away your sins.” If Saul was converted on the road to Damascus, he was the only person to ever have been converted without having his sins washed away! Those who say that Saul was converted on the road to Damascus claim to know something that Paul, Ananias, and the Lord Jesus Christ did not know. Saul was not saved from his past sins until he had been baptized in order to have those sins washed away.

**THE PATTERN OF SAUL.** Paul later wrote that his conversion served as “a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life” (1 Tim. 1:16). Consider the pattern of Saul’s conversion. **He serves as a pattern of who can be converted.** Paul considered himself to be the chief of sinners, yet he was converted (1 Tim. 1:15; Heb. 7:25). **He serves as a pattern of how to be converted.** Saul was converted when he heard, believed, and was baptized. The apostle Paul who penned the majority of the New Testament was converted in this way. Does it not make sense that we will only be converted by taking the same steps? **He serves as a pattern of what to do once you have been converted.** After his conversion, Saul lived a life of faithful service before the Lord (Ac. 9:20-22; 26:19-23). Due to these things, Paul was able to face death with full confidence of his eternal reward (2 Tim. 4:6-8). May we never forget the things we are taught by the pattern of Paul!

## Today

*This is the beginning of a new day. God has given me this day to use as I will. I can waste it or use it for good.*

*But what I do today is important because I am exchanging a day of my life for it.*

*When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever, leaving in its place something I have traded for it.*

*I want it to be gain and not loss, good and not evil, success and not failure, in order that I shall not regret the price that I have paid for it.*

- Selected -

**“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.”**

**Proverbs 27:1**