



The Voice Of Truth

A weekly publication of the

Hillcrest church of Christ

1621 Hillcrest Drive
Green Bay, WI 54313
(920) 499-5677

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com

April 23rd, 2006

"SAUL'S CONVERSION"

By Jimmy Pettigrew

The conversion of Saul is one of the truly remarkable events set forth so ably by Luke the beloved physician in the book of Acts. Jesus made an appearance to Saul on his way to Damascus to bring back Christians bound to Jerusalem (Acts 9:1-2). Then "And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutes! thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he (said), I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:3-6).

Some have obtained the idea that Saul was saved in a manner different than other cases of gospel conversion. NOT SO! Saul was saved precisely as were others in the book of Acts. God has but ONE plan of redemption, and compare it with Saul's conversion.

First, God's Word teaches that one must hear the Word of God. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Saul HEARD. The Bible says, "And he tell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4). Again, he heard the instructions of Ananias, "and now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling

on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). "For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard" (Acts 22:15). There is no doubt but that he heard the Word of the Lord!

Second, the scriptures teach that one must believe in the Deity of Jesus Christ. "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believed not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Saul BELIEVED. This is evidenced by the fact he asked the Lord what he must do in Acts 9:6 and 22:10. An unbeliever would not care what the Lord wanted him to do. Saul's belief is further witnessed in the fact that he did what the Lord told him to do about entering the city and awaiting further instructions on how to be saved. Saul's faith is seen by the fact he willingly did what Ananias told him to do relative to his being baptized.

Third, the Bible teaches one must repent. "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Saul REPENTED. His repentance is strongly implied in Acts 9:9, "And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." He did not manifest behavior of a man reported by many to have already been saved. He was filled with remorse; the awful crime of fighting against God and Christ was pressing upon his soul.



This is the reason for his total abstinence from food and drink. Also, we must remember that Ananias would not immerse an impenitent man, for the great commission demanded repentance prior to baptism (Luke 24:47).

Fourth, the New Testament teaches one must confess his faith in Jesus Christ. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32-33). Also read Acts 8:36-37. Saul CONFESSED. He confessed his faith in Jesus Christ when he said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? ..." (Acts 9:6; 22:10). Later Paul (Saul) wrote "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." He surely confessed the Deity of Jesus Christ.

Fifth, the last, the Bible teaches one must be immersed. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ..." (Mark 16:16). "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). "... even baptism doth also now save us . . ." (1 Pet. 3:20-21). Saul was IMMersed. "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). He "arose, and was baptized" (Acts 9:18).

We can see from this study that God has but ONE plan of redemption for all people. In the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, we see what man must do in order to be saved.

Reprove, Rebuke!
By Jimmy Pettigrew

The apostle Paul said, Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (2 Timothy 4:2). Likewise he said, And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them (Ephesians 5:11). Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear (1 Timothy 5:20). At times I wonder if some have even read these passages. There are those who are

disgusted, displeased and offended by sound gospel preaching. REPROVE implies that one is in error and needs arguments presented to convince him/her of the truth. REBUKE implies that one must be warned of wrong doing. There is a trend to believe that the possibility of offending someone in preaching the Bible is to be avoided. We are to PREACH THE WORD, not to pamper the world. We are to REPROVE and REBUKE, not relax, approve and exonerate sin! We hear such remarks as, none of us is perfect, you'll drive them away, we don't want to make anyone mad, or that will split the church. There is an attitude that has crept into the church to abolish, banish and expel REPROVING and REBUKING from our message. Some say, Instead of emphasizing these things, why not focus on God's grace and mercy? You can love them into righteousness instead of badgering them into it. Just briefly touch on their sins. But Solomon said, "It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools" (Ecclesiastes 7:5).

Today we hear comments such as don't rock the boat and it will tear the congregation apart if you preach on that. Many preachers, elders and members are afraid to take a strong stand to help the congregation see the need to break, shatter and smash sin out of the camp. God did not allow His people of Israel to continue in sin because He was afraid of stirring up a hornet's nest. Preachers, elders and members today should be the same! The Lord desires His church to be pure (Ephesians 5:27). Christians are to put off sin (Colossians 3:8), and the word from which put off is translated signifies moving out and away from. It is unthinkable that Christ will own His bride if she becomes unchaste plays the harlot and has her affections taken away from Christ.

Paul told the elders from Ephesus, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27). Paul is saying in these verses that we have the charge to point out a brother's sin (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20). Failure to purge out sin leads to a toleration of sin. Toleration of sin leads to a love of sin. The love of sin leads to spiritual death (Romans 6:23). This, Christ will NOT tolerate! Instead of tolerating sin, we are to REPROVE it (Ephesians 5:11). Reprove members who feel they don't need to meet with the saints. Reprove the members who are living in adultery. Reprove members who dress ungodly. Rebuke members who belong to the Masonic Lodge. Rebuke members who drink alcoholic beverages. If a congregation permits impure individuals to remain unchastened within its fellowship, it thereby becomes a partaker of their sin and will destroy the whole body (Revelation 2:1-5). When we cover up sin in the church, we corrupt the morality and virtue of the church and destroy its ability to honor God or to save men. Sin must be exposed and purged out of the church or the church will become corrupt and a synagogue of Satan instead of the church of Christ. Such loving action is commanded by Christ (Matthew 18:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6). To expose sin, error and false teachers is to proclaim to the world that the church seeks truth, purity, holiness and godliness, and to protect the church from their influence (1 Corinthians 5:6).