



The Conversion Experience

A Biblical Study of the
**Blood, Water
and Spirit**

The Conversion Experience: A Biblical Study of The Blood, Water and Spirit

By Gary D. Erickson

©1987 Word Aflame Press
Hazelwood, MO 63042-2299
Reprint: 1994, 1995, 1998

Illustrated by Gary Erickson
Cover Design by Laura Jurek

All Scripture quotations in this book are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise identified.

All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced, stored in an electronic system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of Word Aflame Press. Brief quotations may be used in literary reviews.

Printed in United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data



WORD AFLAME PRESS
8855 Dunn Road, Hazelwood, MO 63042
www.pentecostalpublishing.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Erickson, Gary D., 1948-
The conversion experience.

1. Conversion—Biblical teaching. 2. Bible. N.T.—
Criticism, interpretation, etc. I. Title.

BS2545.C59E75 1987

248.2'4

87-6157

ISBN 0-932581-13-7

TABLE: OF CONTENTS

Foreword – 11

Author's Preface – 13

1. The Witness of Blood, Water and Spirit – 15

Based on I John 5:8 an introduction is given to the witness of blood, water and Spirit as relates to the conversion experience. It is witnessed physiologically in nature, experientially in Jesus Christ and spiritually in redemption and regeneration.

2. The Gospel for Us and In Us – 29

The gospel is scripturally defined according to I Corinthians 15:1-4 as the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This work done for us parallels the work done in us at conversion.

3. The Gospel and God's Witness – 37

The importance and historical accuracy of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ is shown. According to II Thessalonians 1:8-9, obedience to the gospel is necessary for salvation. Saving faith includes both mental belief and obedience.

4. The Passover as God's Witness – 53

The deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage is a type of our deliverance from sin. The witness of blood on the doorpost, of water at the crossing the Red Sea and of Spirit by pillar of cloud and pillar of fire is a type of repentance, baptism and receiving the Holy Ghost in our deliverance from sin.

5. The Tabernacle as God's Witness – 71

Israel's approach to God in the Old Testament, especially in atoning for sin, was through the Tabernacle and later the Temple. The approach to God involved blood at the brazen altar, water at the laver of water, and Spirit in the Holy Place. This is another beautiful type of our conversion experience.

6. The Natural Birth as God's Witness – 97

Jesus, the master teacher, used the natural birth as an analogy of our entrance into the kingdom of God. The inconveniences of pregnancy and the suffering in labor are compared to repentance. The infant is suspended in a watery world for nine months, which parallels baptism in water. At birth, the doctor looks for the breath of life and listens for the cry. Our Holy Ghost experience is the breath of life accompanied by the cry of speaking in other tongues.

7. The Miracle of the Seed as God's Witness – 109

Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone" (John 12:24). The germination process of a seed is another beautiful analogy of our conversion and of the Lord's death, burial and resurrection.

8. The Witness at Calvary – 119

The six hours Jesus hung on Calvary are climactic and laden with meaning. There we see the judgment of all sin for all time. John 19:34 and I John 5:8 tell of the blood and water that flowed from the side of Jesus. At Calvary itself there is the witness of blood, water and Spirit.

9. The New Testament Foundation as God's Witness – 131

The church needs a standard of faith and practice. According to Ephesians 2:20, the apostles and prophets are our foundation and Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone. A study of New Testament conversions reveals that repentance, baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and receiving the Holy Ghost were all necessary parts.

10. History as a Witness – 149

A brief panoramic view of history from the end of the first century to the present is given with respect to repentance, baptism and speaking in tongues. The conclusion is that today we are experiencing the promised latter-rain outpouring of the Holy Ghost and a restoration of biblical truth (Joel 2:23-28).

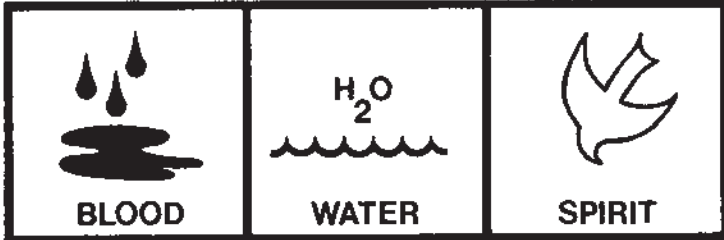
11. Promise, Principle, Problem, Provision – 175

The conversion experience is just the beginning of an exciting life of discipleship. As we proceed toward our inheritance, there are pitfalls awaiting us. From the example of God's dealings with the Israelites, principles are established that provide great understanding to enable us to reach our promised land.

Appendix Summary Diagram: Blood, Water and Spirit – 185

1.

The Witness of Blood, Water and Spirit



“And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one” (1 John 5:8).

God uses three elements—*blood, water and Spirit*—to take us from the human known to the spiritual unknown. The three witnesses named in I John 5:8 appear in the work of Jesus Christ when He purchased our salvation. They also clearly typify the process of our glorious transformation from a sinner to a child of God. The conversion experience in our lives parallels the redemptive work of Jesus, specifically His death, burial and resurrection.

The redemptive work of the Lord Jesus was a natural, physical event. The blood He shed was red, warm blood oozing forth from the ugly, torn flesh wounds of a real man. It was a macabre sight, a painful and agonizing death. The events of Calvary thunder through time with powerful force. All the anguish and pain of Calvary grips our minds through just the mention of Jesus' blood. That one word, *blood*, when associated with our Lord, brings us joy when we consider what it accomplished and sorrow when we consider His agony. But either emotion reminds us of its reality.

Joseph of Arimathea stumbled to assure his footing as the weight of the corpse fell from the cross to his shoulders. He had requested Pilate for permission to take charge of this reverent task personally. With the aid of Nicodemus, he wrapped Jesus' body in a linen cloth along with aloes and myrrh. The dank darkness engulfed them as they entered the freshly hewn tomb and labored to place His body to rest with respect and dignity. Their hearts were

heavy with gloom due to the horrible madness of that afternoon. They strained against the heavy stone as it rolled into place over the mouth of the tomb. Even though His execution was sudden and no preparations were previously made, Jesus was buried respectfully in a new tomb. That the tomb was borrowed did not matter; He did not need it very long anyway!

The burial of Jesus was a physical event. It is historical and noteworthy, for it typifies a burial in our conversion experience. "We are buried with him by baptism into death" (Romans 6:4). This is the witness of *water*.

After the death and burial of Jesus, the disciples were frightened. As they hid behind closed doors, their minds burned with memories of Him. Their hearts throbbed with sorrow for the loss of His friendship and the security He provided. Bewilderment overcame them as they tried to decipher what had happened.

After many hours of secretly confiding together and after several sleepless nights, suddenly their numb and weary minds were electrified by the thought that perhaps He was alive. Peter and John raced to the tomb to find it really empty except for the linen grave clothes. As the news buzzed through Jerusalem, Peter claimed to have seen Him face to face. Suddenly, as the eleven met to eat and discuss these things, Jesus appeared in their midst. They were terrified, thinking they were seeing a spirit. After considering His wounded hands and feet and observing Him eat a piece of broiled fish and honeycomb, they decided it was He. He was alive! Jesus really had conquered death! He was their resurrected Lord!

It is upon this fact that our faith rises or falls (I Corinthians 15:14). On the basis of God's inspired Word, we

must acknowledge the resurrection as a physical, historical event. The *Spirit* bears witness to us today through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:11). This witness should cause us to reflect upon that momentous event with rejoicing, for it has a powerful implication for our conversion experience. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:5).

BLOOD

The average adult has five to seven quarts of blood in his body. Twice every minute the heart pumps this vital fluid through the complete network of arteries, veins and capillaries. Every cell of the body is constantly nourished with oxygen and food. Without this miracle fluid the body would quickly die. Blood disease can have serious consequences, and a blood transfusion can produce amazing results. This physical substance is so closely related to the mystery of life and death that it is no wonder the Lord has used it as a witness of spiritual death and life at conversion.

Blood is common to all humanity. The blood that courses through the veins of every living person on earth is a perpetual witness from God to one aspect of His saving power. Blood is the life fluid of the flesh, carrying food to every cell, fighting disease and eliminating waste. Its delicate chemistry and fascinating function not only speak of God's creative power but also witness to mankind of the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

To God's people, blood holds a very special meaning, invoking feelings of solemnity and awe. It has sacred association with worship. God commanded the Israelites not to use blood for food; blood had to be completely drained