

of mind, but what a change it is.”

THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE

The Lord Jesus Christ came to call sinners to repentance and if they refuse the invitation they will perish (**Luke 5:31-32**). The command to repent is given in **Acts 17:30-31**, “*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*” Salvation is clearly described throughout the Bible as coming to repentance. Repentance is a condition of forgiveness, restoration, and favor. Repentance is a vital part of the gospel and great commission (**Luke 24:44-48**). Repentance is connected with salvation, conversion, forgiveness, escaping judgment, eternal life, faith, and works (**Acts 2:37-41, 3:19, 5:27-31, 13:24, 17:29-31, 11:19, 20:21, 26:16-20**).

Conclusion

True repentance is “acknowledging the truth.” Even though God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (**II Peter 3:9**), many will not repent. The book of Revelation reveals the attitude of those who refused to repent (**Revelation 9:20-21, 16:8-9**). These are those who refuse to kneel at a mourners’ bench and to do business with God. Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior and we must bow the knee and confess with the tongue that He has been given a name above all names (**Philippians 2:9-11**).

“Repentance is real penitence; sorrow or deep contrition for sin, as an offense and dishonor to God, a violation of His holy law, and the basest ingratitude towards a being of infinite benevolence. This is accompanied and followed by amendment of life.”

- Noah Webster, American Dictionary of the English Language,
1828



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*“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”
Acts 16:31*

The RICHIES

OF GRACE

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"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

Repentance

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”

Acts 3:19

+ The Doctrine of Repentance +

Repentance is of great importance in Holy Writ, for without it there is no eternal life. Repentance is the first word of the gospel message (**Mark 1:1, 14-15**). It is the first doctrine preached by our Lord and was the main subject of His first sermon (**Matthew 4:17**) and His last sermon (**Luke 24:47**). Repentance is a vital part of the great commission. The word repentance is found at least one hundred times in the Bible and some sixty times alone in the New Testament. Repentance was proclaimed by all the prophets and preachers throughout Scripture, including John the Baptist, Peter, and Paul.

“We cannot find a better definition of repentance than the one many of us learned at our mother’s knee: Repentance is to leave the sin we loved before, and show that we in earnest grieve by doing so no more.”

- Charles Hadden Spurgeon, “The Royal Savior.” Metropolitan

This article will focus on the truth pertaining to Biblical repentance. It is looked upon today as old fashion, offensive, and considered works by some groups, but there is no salvation without it. Repentance is an invitation to a new life, that is, eternal life.

THE MEANING OF REPENTANCE

Repentance is basically an about face, a permanent change of direction, for we all started out in life going the wrong way. It is clearly a changed mind accompanied with sorrow and regret, resulting in a change of life (**Acts 26:20**). The gospel is summarized in **Acts 20:21** as “repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ.” Together they (repentance and faith) bring salvation to the sinner. These twin graces go side by side and are inseparable. As a husband and wife make a marriage, repentance and faith make salvation. That is why, in **Acts 11:18**, it is called, “repentance unto life” in reference to the first Gentile converts.

The first mention of repentance is in **Genesis 6:5-8**, giving us a clear definition of the word. It is a feeling of regret. God repented and judgment came on the world. In reference to God and the issue of repentance, consider the following references: **Exodus 32:12**, **Jeremiah 18:10**, **Jonah 3:6-10**, **4:2**, **Amos 4:1-6** and **I Samuel 15:11, 35**. In the sense of transgression, God does not repent as a man (**Numbers 23:19**). In **Exodus 13:17**, repentance is defined as turning, “*And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.*” God knew their “change of mind” would result in a “change of action.” They were in danger of changing their minds and reversing the Exodus and returning the way they came. Please consider the text, a change of mind without a change of action would be meaningless. So, repentance is to change one’s direction as the Thessalonians did in **I Thessalonians 1:9**, “*For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.*” It is seeing ourselves as God sees us and accepting it. Repentance is a sinner raising the white flag of surrender to God. Keep in mind, a changed mind can only be known by a changed direction. Repentance is more than just a decision, it is a way of life. Again in **Ezekiel 14:6**. Repentance is defined as turning from sin and idols.

In **Matthew 12:40-41**, the Lord said that Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, but in **Jonah 3:8,10**, the word repent is never used, but the word turned is. John the Baptist’s ministry is clearly defined by

the preaching of repentance in **Luke 3:3-14**. John the Baptist demanded evidence from the people that they had repented before he would baptize them (the specific changes of action are listed in the text). John clearly defined repentance as a change of heart, purpose, and direction. The outward signs of repentance are predicted in **Isaiah 40:3-5**, in reference to John the Baptist’s ministry. He was used of God as a forerunner of Messiah to turn and prepare a people for the Lord. The Pharisees rejected the baptism of John (**Luke 7:27-30**) while others received it. The demand of repentance is clearly seen by the Lord’s words in **Luke 13:3 & 5**, “*except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*”

THE FRUIT OF REPENTANCE

Please consider again the words of John the Baptist in **Matthew 3:8**, “*Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.*” The fruit or evidence of genuine repentance is seen as the sincerity of the repentant sinner. Those who have repented will have a repentant heart, that is, a lifelong repenter (**II Samuel 17:7-13**, **Matthew 26:75**). As so plainly put by another author, “The root of repentance is in the heart, and the fruit of repentance is a holy performance.”

According to **II Corinthians 7:11**, the church at Corinth needed to repent: “*For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*” Godly sorrow produces repentance whereas worldly sorrow produces death. The exercise of godly sorrow produced obedience among the church as they received the apostles’ command (**verse 8-11**). In Corinth, there was a renewed interest in spiritual things as a result of their repentance. Thus, we must examine ourselves (**II Corinthians 13:5**).

The words of our Lord to the first century churches in Asia Minor were repent or else (**Revelation 2:4-5, 15-16, 20-21, 3:2-3, 15, 19**). A number of the churches had degenerated to the place similar to the church today. The only cure was repentance, that is, turning from wrong actions to right actions. Repentance is more than a sinner’s prayer, penance, reform or confession. It is even more than believing or having remorse. Repentance is a turning to God. John Bunyon said, “Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or will thou have thy sins and go to hell?” John Milton said, “Repentance is the golden key that opens the palace of eternity. The gate of God’s kingdom is closed to those who refuse to repent.” Charles Spurgeon also said, “Repentance is a change