

# The Truth About **REPENTANCE**

Biblical and Historical Proof

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Modern religion, with its ever-changing concepts, has left confusion in the minds of many people concerning true repentance. What does the Bible really say? Don't be satisfied with theories and ideas of men, when you can know the truth about this important subject.

- **WHAT IS REPENTANCE?**

Repentance is a religious term that denotes a redirection of a person's mind, will and actions as indicated in the Greek word metanoia—a change of mind. Webster's Third New International Dictionary.

Repentance is both sorrow for sin and the act of turning away from it. Encyclopedia Americana, Edition 1983 Vol. 21, p.495.

The turning from sin is emphatically a matter of conduct, but it is also a matter of the heart. Dictionary of the Bible, by James Hastings, Vol, IV, p.225.

Repentance in the ethico-religious sense is turning away from sin and back to God. Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, Edition 1962, Vol. IV, p.33.

The nature of repentance is not only a turning from, but also a turning to. It will cause a person to stop a wrong action and begin a right one.

- **IS REPENTANCE IMPORTANT TO SALVATION?**

Ezekiel announced, "Thus sayeth the Lord God REPENT, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations." Eze. 14:6. John the Baptist preached, "REPENT YE: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Mat. 3:2. God COMMANDETH all men everywhere to REPENT. Acts 17:30. "Except ye REPENT, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13:3. (Also 2 Peter 3:9.)

Jesus commissioned, as He opened the understanding of His disciples to the Scripture, "That REPENTANCE and REMISSION of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem." Luke 24:47. In response to the question, "What shall we do?" Peter said, as he fulfilled the Lord's commission, "REPENT, and be baptized everyone of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:36.

Certainly true repentance is a command of God, and necessary for Divine forgiveness; therefore, it is definitely an important step in God's wonderful plan of salvation for man.

- **HOW TO REPENT**

### ***1. Conviction Of Sin***

Before there can be true repentance, a sinner must have an understanding and acknowledgement that he is guilty of sin. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5:12. (Also Rd. 3:23.) "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law (God's Word)." 1 John 3:4. Therefore, it is against God (Ps. 51:4) and is punishable by death (Eze. 18:20). "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23. A transgressor is also guilty of the blood of Jesus Christ, because the Lord hath laid on Him (Jesus Christ) the iniquity of us all. Is. 53:6. Yet, in Jesus Christ we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Col. 1:14. But, unless a sinner repents he will stand condemned before God on judgement day, forever to be lost (Luke 13:3; Jude 15; Rev. 21:8).

The knowledge of God's Word will reveal sins in a person's life, which will bring conviction. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, they that heard God's Word were pricked (convicted) in their heart. Acts 2:37.

Also experiences of God's chastisements add to conviction. God said in His Word, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." Rev. 3:19. Although conviction of sin brings an uncomfortable feeling of shame and guilt, when followed by true repentance, it will lead to great rejoicing!

### ***2. Godly Sorrow***

Feelings of deep sorrow, regret and remorse over sin must accompany an individual's repentance. One should not sorrow for personal hardship brought on by sin, but rather remorse over the hurt he has caused a loving, forgiving God. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner ... For godly sorrow, worketh repentance to salvation . . . but the sorrow of the world worketh death." 2 Cor. 7:9,10. (Also Joel 2:12; Ps. 34:18.)

### ***3. Will to Repent***

The prodigal son came to himself and said. "I WILL arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." Luke 15:18. If a sinner is willing to repent, God is willing to forgive him of his sins. "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.

#### ***4. Plead for Mercy***

The first thing David said in his prayer of repentance was, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." Ps. 51:1. Divine forgiveness is not based upon the accumulated merits of man, but only on the love and mercy of God. .... While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5:8. "The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." Luke 18:13. In approaching God, we must cast ourselves without reservation upon His mercy.

#### ***5. Confession to God***

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Pro. 28:13.

A person must be honest; admit his sins; confess them openly to God: not to man. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1.

#### ***6. Forsake all Sin***

Ezekiel said, "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit." Eze. 18:31. Jesus said to the woman taken in adultery, "...Go, and SIN NO MORE." John 8:11. (Also 1 Thes. 5:22; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 1 John 2:15-16; Titus 2:11-12.)

Repentance is actually a crucifixion of one's sinful nature at an altar of self denial (Ro. 6:6; Mark 8:34). A sincere person must turn from all sin and begin a new life in Christ. Paul wrote, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid, How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Ro. 6:1,2. (Also 1 John 3:4-9.)

#### ***7. Ask God for Forgiveness***

After a sinner has surrendered all to God, he should simply ask God to forgive him for all his sins. The Bible said, "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity (sin)." Ho. 14:2. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.

#### ***8. Receive God's Forgiveness***

To receive God's forgiveness, you must forgive others. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." Mat. 6:14. Also, you must forgive yourself and forget your sinful past. Paul said, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3:13,14. When you have truly repented, accept God's forgiveness and praise Him! "Though your sins be as scarlet, they SHALL BE WHITE AS SNOW; though they

be like crimson, they SHALL BE AS WOOL" Is. 1:18. "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy. Ps. 86:5.

- **RESULTS OF REPENTANCE**

- 1. Great Joy**

When the prodigal son repented, there was much rejoicing. Luke 15:23. Jesus said, "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." Luke 15:7. There is great joy in knowing God's wonderful forgiveness! When the Samaritans gave heed to Philip's preaching, there was great joy in that city. Acts 8:5-8.

- 2. New Birth**

Now that the old sinful man is dead through repentance, a believer is ready for the "new birth," which consists of the two elements, water and spirit. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of WATER and of the SPIRIT, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5.

- a. Water Baptism**

Of course, following a death there must be a burial. The old sinful man must be put away. "Therefore we are BURIED with Him (Jesus Christ) BY BAPTISM into death." Rom. 6:4. (Also Col. 2:12.) Repentance must be followed by water baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ for the REMISSION OF SINS (Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38). "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the Name of the Lord." Acts 22:16.

- b. Holy Spirit Baptism**

The Holy Spirit Baptism is typical of the resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:5; 8:11; Col. 2:12). This completes our "new birth and makes us new persons in Christ. Ezekiel prophesied about this glorious experience, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, . . . and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Eze. 36:26,27. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a NEW CREATURE: old things are passed away; behold, ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW." 2 Cor. 5:17. (Also Acts 1:8; Ro. 5:5; 8:9;14:17.) The Holy Spirit Baptism is promised to all who will obey the Word of God. (See Acts 2:4,38,39; 5:32.)

Paul emphasized, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. 7:1. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have (received) of God, and ye are not your own?" 1 Cor. 6:19. "If any man defile the temple of

God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Cor. 3:17.  
"Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit." 1 Cor. 6:20.

### ***3. Total Cleansing***

John said, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7. (Also 1 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 1:5.) When God cleanses us from all sin we are totally clean. It is as though we had never committed a sin. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Ps. 103:12.

If you desire a new life in Christ, I urge you to repent of all your sins and experience the wonderful, powerful "new birth" of water and the Spirit! God is willing and waiting to change your life for the better, today! "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that ALL SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE." 2 Pet. 3:9.

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