

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Lk 13:3. Let us explore the Scripture to determine: **JUST WHAT IS REPENTANCE?** Repentance is essential for our salvation. Over and over this truth is repeated throughout the Bible. During the personal ministry, **John the Baptist** and **the Son of God**, in preparing lost humanity for the coming of the kingdom, continually declared, **“Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”** (*Matt. 3:1-2; Matt. 4:17*). Then after Jesus was resurrected, He met with his apostles, **“And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”** *Lk. 24:46-47*

Again, just what is repentance? Let us now turn to the Scripture for the answer!

FIRST, LET US CONSIDER WHAT IT IS NOT:

Repentance is not conviction! Conviction is being aware of the guilt of sin and the need for forgiveness. One who has not obeyed the gospel must become aware of their spiritual condition and recognize that because of sin they are spiritually lost. Until a person becomes convicted of their sinful state they will see no need or benefit in obeying the gospel.

The Holy Spirit convicts sinners of their sins. *John 16:7-8, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:”* That word “reprove” carries the idea of conviction. Jesus said that the HS would convict the world. He does that by the inspired Word, which is called “the sword of the Spirit.” (Eph 6:17) This is done when a sinner is taught about the consequences of sin and the way of redemption from sin. The Word convicts and teaches what a person needs to do in dealing with his sin problem. But, again being convicted of one's sins is not repentance.

On the day of Pentecost the Apostle Peter preached the first sermon of the gospel. The Jews who heard him proclaim that they were responsible for the Son of God's death were convicted of their sins and wanted to know what they must do to obtain forgiveness.

Acts 2:36-38, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be

baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” These people were convicted by the preaching of Peter. Being commanded to repent and be baptized reveals that being convicted of one's sins is not repentance.

Repentance is not fear!

There are two types of fear to take into consideration, Godly fear and being sacred. Godly fear or reverence unto the Lord is essential. *Eccl. 12:13*, *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”* Solomon declares fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and understanding (*Prov. 9:10*). Regardless of how many degrees a person has they are not very wise nor have the beginning of understanding if they do not fear God. The Apostle Paul speaks of those in whom: *“There is no fear of God before their eyes”* (*Rom. 3:18*). The second kind of fear is just being afraid; like being afraid of the dark. This is a different kind of fear altogether from godly fear. However, there is a time when a person should be scared of God; and that’s when he is doing things contrary to the will of God. The Hebrew writer said, *Heb 10:31* *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* Both Eph 5:6 and Col 3:6 speaks of the *wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.*

Some may have a respectful fear toward God and still not repent. In the book of James we have preserved for us the inspired words which tell us that the devils believed and trembled. They had a respectful fear of God. *James 2:19-20*, *“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”*

Repentance is not sorrow! There are two kinds of sorrow, Godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. Godly sorrow leads one to repentance; whereas, one possess worldly sorrow when they have been caught doing something they should not be doing. Those with worldly sorrow do not repent, but would do the same thing if they got a chance to do so again. What is Godly sorrow? It is grief and sorrow because we have sinned. *2 Cor. 7:10*, *“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”*

When Jesus proclaimed the Sermon on the Mount He declared: *“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted”* (*Matt. 5:4*). The mourning in that passage is groaning because of the sin in your life. We see this illustrated in the life of Peter after he sinned in the garden; the text says that he went out and wept bitterly. This was Godly sorrow! Godly sorrow leads to repentance, but is not repentance.

REPENTANCE IS A CHANGE OF ONE'S WILL, A CHANGE OF MIND.

Jesus illustrates this truth in speaking to the chief priests and Jewish elders at the temple at: *Matt. 21:28-32*, ***“But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.*** The boy repented and went; he changed his mind and did what his father wanted him to do.

In **Luke 15** we learn of **the Prodigal son** who demanded his inheritance and then went out and “blew it” in riotous living. After he spent all of us money he hired out to feed the man's hogs. While doing so he was about to pass out because of hunger and was going to eat some of the husk that was feed for the hogs. He then came to realize the foolishness of what he had been doing. Hear his words of repentance at:

Lk. 15:17-19, ***“And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.***” Did you notice that he had a change of heart and will. When anyone truly repents their will is to do the Will of the Heavenly Father. Their attitude and desire is to learn and do the Will of the Lord.

IS REPENTANCE ALL THERE IS? As you read through yours Bibles, you will discover that nothing “alone” saves a person. Certainly one who is penitent feels so much better. But changing your heart toward sinful behavior does not eradicate the consequences of that sin. The next logical thing to do after repentance is to seek forgiveness. If you have sinned against man and God, then you need to seek forgiveness from both man and God. When we sin against God, we need to seek His forgiveness on His terms of forgiveness. On the day of Pentecost the Jews were pricked in their heart (convicted of their sins). When they heard Peter sum up his sermon pointing out they were responsible for the death of the Son of God we learn at:

Acts 2:36-38, ***“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be***

baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

That passage reveals those who believe must not only repent, but be baptized for the remission of their sins. It's at this time that your relationship is restored with God. Until you deal with the sin problem, there is a separation between you and your Creator (Isa 59:1-2)

Are you willing to change and submit to the will of our Heavenly Father?

Invitation