

Man Must Repent

“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”
(Luke 13:3).

“Repent after me, *‘I accept the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior.’* Now, there you have it, you are saved.” How often have you heard this said? How often have you said it yourself? This thinking expresses, “only believe and you will be saved.” There are several problems with this type of thinking.

First of all, like A. W. Tozer said, it requires that Jesus would “stand hat-in-hand awaiting our verdict on Him, instead of kneeling with troubled hearts awaiting his verdict on us.” The picture here depicts Jesus standing before you, the judge, having looked at all the evidence, and waiting (and hoping) that you will give the verdict, “I believe. I accept.” Man is like that; he always wants to be in control. We have been given the freedom to make our own decisions, but it is God who is in control. Jesus said, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you” (John 15:16). He later said, “I have chosen you out of the world” (John 15:19). It is God who will judge us. Paul said the Lord is the “Righteous Judge” (2 Timothy 4:8). “The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:30-31).

It is common today to hear preachers encourage someone to “accept the Lord as your personal Savior.” Raymond Woodward in his article, *What is Repentance* states, “The Bible never talks about us “accepting” the Lord. (In fact, we ought to be eternally grateful that He ever chose to accept us!)”

The Bible teaches actual conversion cannot take place without repentance. Jesus taught, “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

John the Baptist came preaching repentance (Matthew 3:1-2). Jesus Christ also began His ministry with a call to “repentance.”

“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17).

Before going to heaven Jesus reminded His disciples, “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). That sounds quite inclusive. He said, “all men every where.”

“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 Peter 3:9).

God deemed it necessary that repentance be preached in every nation. The need for repentance is universal because sin is universal. Sin has touched every human life.

Repentance takes place when we “confess” our sins. “True confession is when we say the same thing about our sins that God says about them.” (The Simplicity of Salvation)

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Woodward defines biblical repentance as “an inward change of ATTITUDE leading to an outward change of ACTION. Unless both of these occur, real repentance has not taken place.”

Repentance is an important step in the plan of salvation. It is the first step that man takes toward God and the forgiveness of sins. Peter said, “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” (Acts 2:38).

Eddie Jones in *The Truth About Repentance* writes, “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.”

Repentance involves turning away from sin, to the Lord. It is a turning point in life. An individual walking one way, the sinful way, makes an “about-face” and starts walking in the opposite direction toward God. Repentance is “to turn away from the way you are going; asking God for forgiveness.”

- “But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die” (Ezekiel 18:21).
- “Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once” (Proverbs 28:18).

How to Repent?

The goodness of God leads men to repentance and should not be despised.

“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Romans 2:4).

- The Gospel is presented (Romans 10:14).
- The sinner is convicted of his sins (Acts 2:37).
- He accepts he is a sinner (Romans 3:23; 6:23).

- Realizes that God has provided a Savior (Matthew 1:21; John 4:42).
- Repents (confesses) his sins. He is not only sorry but has made a decision to forsake sin (Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:7) and make a turn-around toward God (Luke 18:13).

What does God do with sins once they are forgiven?

- He puts them in the bottom of the sea (Micah 7:19).
- He puts our sin behind his back (Isaiah 38:17).
- He doesn't remember them anymore (Jeremiah 31:34).
- He removes them as far as the east is from the west (Psalms 103:12).



HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP?

The Bible teaches that actual conversion cannot take place without repentance.

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Is this what the Bible teaches?			
Is this what you believe?			
Is this what your church teaches?			

Study Questions

1. Given the following statements, write out the verse (with Scripture reference) that supports the statement.

1) We have been given the freedom to make our own decisions, but God is in control.

2) It is God who will judge us. _____

3) The Bible teaches that conversion cannot take place without repentance. _____

4) Repentance is an important step in the plan of salvation. _____
