

True Repentance

Have you truly been born again?

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I

True Repentance

LAM OF THE PERSUASION that repentance towards God the Father is not only an ingredient in salvation, but is the key to being saved from the wrath of God. There is a problem though, and that is most people either have an absolute ignorance on what repentance is, or a deficient understanding of all that repentance includes. For the most part I have seen that the deficient understanding is what people are experiencing and this stems from a lack of preaching on genuine, biblical repentance, as well as a lack of longing from the listener to dig deep into the word of God and study the Scriptures daily; when the blind lead the blind both the teacher and the student fall into the ditch (Matthew 15:14).

The deficient mindset is the most dangerous because such thinking usually has an amount of truth attached to it. Such truth is seen as full, lacking nothing, because of its being truth. This is very deceptive. For example, being a father consists of many truths. One truth is that a father should be able to listen to his children when they speak to him. Let's say a man has this down "to a tee" and is always an excellent listener to his children. At the same time this man lacks other fatherly attributes such as spending quantity time with his children or disciplining his children when foolishness manifests itself in their life. This father does exhibit one true attribute, but he is missing the other "pieces to the puzzle," and thus the puzzle is incomplete at best. What makes any deception so deceptive is the amount of truth the deception contains.

Many people in Christianity today believe that they have repented, but all they have done is felt a bit sorry for their sin if anything. This is not genuine repentance. Some have merely asked God to forgive them with their mouth and they believe they have repented correctly and fully. All such ideas are not scripturally complete. Others may have repented wrongly, not understanding what the biblical definition of sin is. Some people repent of things that never were and never will be sin, while others continue to do things that are sin in God's eyes, but are not looked upon as sin by a person because this person does not read their Bible. They instead rely on what their parents, grandparents, or a beloved Pastor taught them. Then you have the crowd of people who could just care less about repentance. They show up for church once a week or a couple times a month, only because of tradition or other reasons. They may lift their hands and sing a few songs, and may even shed a tear or two, only to leave the place of worship and sin with all their might, loving it. Such a person shows clear signs of being unregenerate and on their way to experiencing the wrath of God at the judgment.

I have written this book because of the droves of people I have met in my life who believe they are saved because they prayed a prayer, walked down an aisle, repeated words, got baptized, etc. It seems I meet people every day that fit under these categories, but yet they have no yearning, no longing for the Father. They have gone through the motions and may have experienced some emotion, but they are on their way to torment that is fiercer than they have ever imagined. You may just be one of these people. I beg you to read on, and examine my words by the Bible that you should be reading everyday.

II

A Work of Yahweh

AS I SEE IT, THERE are at least four steps to biblical repentance. Now, I can explain these steps to you and you can go through them in mere motion or ritual, but that does not necessarily mean that true repentance has taken place in your life. I am a man, and a man can only take a person so far when it comes to salvation. The only reason a preacher plays any part in the salvation of an individual is because God has chosen to use the preacher in His marvelous working. First Corinthians 3:18 has Paul writing to the Corinthians about their foolishness in declaring that one of them is of Apollos and the other of them is of Paul. Paul explains that he and Apollos are workers together in the same ministry, and that all they are doing as ministers is planting seeds and watering those seeds. This is all they may do for he goes on to say that it is God that gives the increase; not Paul and not Apollos. This is how it is today, yet I have seen preachers do very dramatic things when it comes to trying to get people to repent, believe, and get saved. These same preachers then pronounce that people are saved after praying a prayer and spending five minutes with a counselor; they then move on to the next city to proclaim that at their last gospel meeting 100 people “got saved.”

There is one preacher I have seen on television who at the end of the broadcast asks people to pray a prayer along with him. After the prayer, he proclaims to the millions of viewers, “Friend, if you prayed that prayer we believe you got born again!” This man makes salvation sound like a vaccination or a flu shot. Drove of people are deceived into thinking that because they prayed a prayer they have a one way ticket to the kingdom of heaven. This particular minister never even preaches about the depravity and sinfulness of man. Instead, he has people thinking that they are basically good and have some kind of mental power to manipulate God like a butler. They pull the chain and God responds and does what the creature asks Him to do. So this guy is preaching some sort of religious psychology to people and then telling them to pray a prayer and ask Christ to come into their

heart. The people then think that they are really saved, but they have no clue as to what from, and they have no inkling as to what the gospel, substitutionary atonement, the great exchange, or anything of pertinent quality to salvation, is.

What's absolutely ridiculous about this is that there isn't one place in the Bible where a prophet, apostle or anybody led someone else in a prayer to get saved. The primary proclamation made by those truly preaching the word of Almighty Yahweh was for people to repent. The call for repentance is rarely ever mentioned in the majority of pulpits today. This means that the majority of pulpits are nothing more than pulpits for messengers of Satan appearing to the masses as angels of light. A false proclamation is being made by a false prophet.

Someone reading now may say, "Well what about Romans 10 which states that faith comes by hearing, and then goes on to ask, "How can people hear without a preacher?" It is true that God uses the preaching of His word to save people, but it must also be understood that a preacher cannot preach the word of Yahweh without being sent by Yahweh. There were times (and are times now) when prophets came declaring a "thus saith Yahweh" but Yahweh did not send them. Any man can get up and speak a few words, sprinkling a few Scriptures in those words, but it takes a man who is genuinely sent by Yahweh to preach the true message of Scripture. A preacher that is sent will tell people to repent, and he will not back down from telling them what they need to repent of, and how dreadful it will be for them if they do not repent.

The reason that repentance is a work of God is because regeneration is a work of God. There are two births that have happened in a regenerate person. The first is the birth of the flesh, which everyone partakes of, and the second is the birth of the spirit, what the Bible calls in John 3 as being born again or born from above. A person has no "say so" in his first birth as you will probably agree. Isaiah 45:10 proclaims, "Woe to him who says to a father, what are you begetting, or to a woman, to what are you giving birth?" The point is that the child being born did not choose in them self to be born or birthed; the choice came from a source outside of them. This is also how it is in being born of the spirit. Father Yahweh births people spiritually; people do not birth them selves. This is seen in just one verse prior, Isaiah 45:9. "Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker – an earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, what are you doing? Or the thing you are making say, He has no hands?" Do you see here that we are considered clay in the hands of Yahweh the Potter? When is the last time you ever heard of clay deciding what it will be? Does clay remark to the potter, "I would like you to make me into a beautiful vase rather than a spittoon"? Of course not; the potter makes the decision as to what the clay will become, and Yahweh makes the decision as to what His creations will become, based upon His sovereign will and His sovereign purpose.

I explain this to my children like this. My oldest daughter is almost eleven and she enjoys making crafts. When she makes a craft she often brings it to me to show me of her efforts, and they are always tremendous. In explaining Yahweh's

sovereignty over His creation, I explained my daughter's sovereignty over her creations or crafts. I told her that she has complete control over the crafts she makes. She may give one to her father or mother if she chooses, or she may decide to throw the craft away after she is done or either at a future time. The point is this: the decision is hers because she is the one who made the craft.

I know that many people do not like to hear verses like those I've quoted from Isaiah, and this is primarily because they want to think they had something to do with their salvation. When people hear verses about God's sovereignty they sometimes cringe and think that their god isn't like that. Their god may not be like that at all, but the God of sacred Scripture is. Here exists another problem; people are not really and truly familiar with the God of the Bible. They do not know His name (Yahweh), and they certainly do not know of His many qualities, attributes, or of His holiness (uniqueness).

If you had something to do with your salvation then it must be said that you worked your way to the Kingdom. You would have something to boast about because of what you did. The person next to you didn't do what you did, and the reason is because they were less intelligent, and were not as sensitive as yourself to the gospel call. Of course I am being facetious with my words. I write this way to show you the fallacy of believing that your works are involved in your regeneration experience. You didn't have anything to do with your rebirth. My daughter's crafts didn't have anything to do with their making either. Both are creations in the hands of a Creator (or in my daughter's case creator with a lower case "c").

Let me tell you that there are things that you must do such as repent, believe, be baptized, follow Christ, etc. However, the reason you do them, the reason you even have any desire to do them, is because God has first performed spiritual heart surgery upon you. You wouldn't ever have any desire at all to do anything for God if He did not first open up your heart to His plan, i.e. birth you by the Spirit. Romans 8:58 tells us that the mind set on carnality will do things that are carnal, fleshly, or worldly. It goes on to say that this mind is not able to do the things of the Spirit and is thus at enmity with God. This mind cannot please God. It cannot subject itself to His law. First Corinthians 2:14 teaches the exact same concept by saying that the natural man (the man who has not been born of the Spirit) does not accept the things of the Spirit of God because he cannot (does not have the ability) to receive them. Why? They are spiritually discerned, and thus can only be discerned by those who have been born of the Spirit.

The author of the above two texts makes this abundantly clear in another text in Romans 9. The entire point of Romans 9 is to show the Israelites that just because they are a fleshly Israelite does not automatically mean they are going to be saved. Paul shows how that just being in Abraham doesn't mean you are called, for in Isaac shall the seed be called. In other words, Abraham had other sons than Isaac, but it was through Isaac that the promise would come. But it goes further than this. Just because you are a son of Isaac doesn't mean you are a child of the

promise, for Isaac had two sons – Jacob and Esau. The Bible tells us that God loved Jacob, but hated Esau. I know that most have been taught that God loves everyone, but that doesn't make it true. Remember, you must always take what you hear and examine it by the Scriptures. In this case (Romans 9), Paul is simply quoting an Old Testament passage of Scripture, Malachi 1:13. If you notice Malachi 1:1 you will see that Yahweh Himself said He hated Esau; Paul wasn't coming up with anything new.

Paul is giving these examples to show us the truth he expresses in Romans 9:6, "...For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel." In other words, every fleshly, individual Israelite is not going to be saved; it is only those whom God chooses to be saved that will be saved. Who are the true Israelites then? The ones who God calls by His sovereign purpose and because of His sovereign will. This makes salvation totally of Yahweh and by grace. Any other way would place salvation as a working of man.

This is seen by noticing further what the text states concerning Jacob and Esau. It wasn't that Jacob did all the right things and therefore God chose him, and it wasn't that Esau did all the wrong things and therefore God hated him. The text says in Romans 9:11, "For though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls..." Take special note here that God's choosing was not because of anything that the twins did. This would have to then mean that God's choice was not because of what He foresaw or foreknew the twins would do, this too would be by works and not by calling. God, for purposes known only to Him, chose Jacob and did not choose Esau, and He can do this because He is the Almighty Creator. Don't forget, He is the Potter and we are the clay. Paul goes on to explain exactly this in verses 20-23. Paul must have understood what the prophet Isaiah was speaking of in Isaiah 45, as well as what Jeremiah spoke of in Jeremiah 18:15. Because of his understanding he wrote in Romans 9:16, "So it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy."

Some people actually think that Paul made all of this election stuff up somehow, and that it flies in the face of everything that Yahweh states elsewhere. I have already shown where this teaching is found in the Old Testament Scriptures, and I will show further evidence shortly, but before doing so I want to show how that our beloved Messiah, the Son of the Most High, taught the exact same doctrine; it did not originate with Paul.

Turn with me to John 6 and let us take extra special care to listen to Yeshua's words as He teaches the people around Him about man's ability to come to Him. We know that the context of the chapter has to do with coming to Yeshua, and believing upon Yeshua for eternal life. He makes this clear in John 6:35 by saying, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." He goes on later in the text to speak of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, and we see here that He defines for us what this means

even prior to saying such. Eating His flesh equals coming to Him and not hungering; drinking His blood equals believing upon Him and never thirsting again.

But why do people come to Him? Is it because they have a desire that originates within their fleshly mind? Is it because they are smarter or more intelligent than the next fellow? Is it because they are keener in their senses and muster up some kind of “want to”? What does Yeshua tell us? He makes it very plain in verse 37 by saying, “All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.” The giving of men by the Father to the Son precedes the coming of men to the Son. In other words, before a man can come to the Son and believe on the Son, he must be given to the Son by the Father. The first action that takes place is not in man, it is in God the Father. Salvation is truly and solely of Yahweh. (Theologians sometimes term this as monergism, literally meaning “one energy,” and this is opposed to synergism, literally meaning “two” or “more than one energy.” Salvation is monergistic in that Yahweh performs what is necessary in man to cause him to desire the things of God. I will speak more on this soon.)

Yeshua doesn’t stop here with His statements about election. He goes on to make another bold declaration in John 6:44, “No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.” This verse is packed with theology. Let me do the very best I can to unpack it. I’m sure I will fall short at fully dissecting our precious Lord’s words.

He begins by saying “no one,” and I see no reason why we should not take this to mean exactly what it says. No one, not you or I, the President, the rich, the poor, the most spiritual man you can think of. No one. Therefore we cannot say that Yeshua is speaking here of a certain group that can’t come to Him, but there are other groups that do

have the ability to come to Him. He negates such thinking by using the two words, no one. He goes on to say that “No one can come to Me,” and in the word “can” we have a statement of ability.

The other day one of my children asked me, “Dad, can I go and ride my bike?” I responded to them by saying, “I’m sure that you can, but that is not the proper way to ask me.” For my child to ask me if they “can” ride their bike is asking me if they have the ability to ride their bike. I know that they can, they should ask me “may” I go ride my bike, and then they are seeking my permission. There is a major difference. And the difference should be seen here when Yeshua says that no one “can come” to Him. What He means is that no one has the ability to come to Him.

Of course, the verse does not stop there. If it did then we would all be in a huge amount of trouble. He continues by saying, “...unless the Father who sent Me draws him...”

So, no one has the ability to come to the Son unless the Father who sent the Son draws that person. If you have truly come to the Son it is because the Father drew you to the Son, not because you came yourself.

I have heard a lot of argumentation over the word “draw” here. Some theologians try really hard to make this some kind of “wooing” or “asking” of God to humans, and then placing the final decision on man. I believe that such is hardly the case. The Greek word here has the meaning of “to drag” literally or figuratively. It is used in the New Testament Scriptures of drawing a sword from its sheathe (John 18:10), of drawing a net full of fish to land (John 21:10), and of dragging people somewhere forcibly (Acts 16:19; 21:30; James 2:6). Now, I do not believe that Yahweh draws men by dragging them somewhere against their will. I’ve heard others accuse men of my persuasion that this is what we they are teaching. I point out the other uses of the word to show that draw doesn’t mean you just call out to something and ask it to come to you. The person doing the drawing or the dragging is the one that is in control. Yahweh changes the will of man, He takes out a heart that cannot respond to Him and places in man a heart that can respond to Him. Yahweh is in control of the process and that’s why Yeshua says “unless the Father draws them, no man can come to Him.”

The last part of the verse proves that this is the understanding of the drawing. Notice that Yeshua says, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day.” Did you notice the word him is used in the verse twice? Immediately after He speaks of the Father drawing him (the person), Yeshua continues by saying that this person will be raised up on the last day. Raised to what, destruction? I hardly think so. Raised up on the last day here means raised to everlasting life, exactly what Yeshua spoke of in John 5:29, the resurrection of life. Pay careful attention here. Those who the Father gives to the Son (John 6:37), and those who the Father draws to the Son (John 6:44) are raised up on the last day to eternal life. This is seen further in a statement “sandwiched” between the two texts we have covered in John 6:39-40, “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it upon on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I myself will raise him up on the last day.” Look at this! Yeshua says that Yahweh’s will is that He lose nothing – but raise it up on the last day! This is speaking of not losing anyone that the Father has given to the Son! Raised up on the last day is synonymous with what comes in verse 40 – eternal life.

Every single individual that the Father gives to the Son will come to the Son, believe on the Son and be raised up on the last day to a resurrection of life. The Father saves people perfectly through His Son, and thus the Father will lose nothing. This is only because salvation is a work of God and not man. If it was up to man, every single one of us would be lost, but since it is

up to God, no one who the Father chooses will be lost. All glory thus goes to the Father, and no glory is reserved for the creature.

Man in His Own Power

I have observed over the years people who have tried to serve Yahweh in their own power. I remember a friend of mine growing up who I prayed with for quite some time after a church service. I was there with him, and if I recall correctly, there were a few other people who stayed with us. My goal was to pray that salvation would come to his soul. At the time, I really did not understand all that salvation entailed, but I was seeking for God to save him. I remember praying earnestly with tears that he would be saved.

I remember asking God to come and fill my friend with His Spirit.

Later that day I took part in my friend's baptism. It was a wonderful feeling. The next service I remember standing beside him and listening to him speak to a very dear sister in the church. He had cut his hair, dressed up, and seemed to even smell different than he used to. He told her, "This is the new me!" As I was listening something was not feeling right to me. I was thinking to myself, "Does he really believe that by changing his hair style and clothing that he is now acceptable to God?" Don't get me wrong, I do believe that when Yahweh works on the inside of a person, that person will eventually show forth the work on the outside, even to the point of the clothing they wear, but I just felt like in this case it wasn't Yahweh, it was man. I saw this friend of mine stay in church (and appearing to serve God) for around a month or so, and he was in and out later, but I know now that the Father didn't give him to the Son. I know this because if it really was a work of God in his heart that day, it would have stayed. It did not stay, it rather withered away; thus it was of man. Yeshua said in Matthew 15:13, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up."

This happens with a lot of people. I've witnessed to people before and they will somewhat confess to me, "I know, I know, I need to stop doing all these things and start doing all these other things." I believe that such thinking is backwards. It is putting the cart in front of the horse or the fruit in front of the root. What they are thinking is that they can work their way to salvation, so instead of seeking for Christ and trusting in Christ, they just think they need to stop doing all the things they love and start doing all the things they hate. What they need to be seeking is to be clothed in Christ. They need to get down on their knees, fast, weep, mourn, and cry out to God who alone can save them from their sins. I guarantee this, if the Father has given them to the Son (John 6:37) they will be a new creature, and it will not be because they walked down an isle or repeated a prayer some false prophet said to them, it will be because God has come in and changed their heart to serve Him. All those things they spoke of changing before will change. They will not have to stop doing all the things they love, because they will love to serve God. What they used to hate, the commandments of God, they will now love. The things

they once loved, sin as a whole, they will now hate with fervent passion.

We steal this work of God from so many people. Why do I say this? I say this because we make salvation a work of man. We explain to people that they need to do this and this to be saved. Now, as I said before, I believe that we must do actions like repent, believe, confess, be baptized, follow Christ, etc. The men at Pentecost in Acts 2 asked Peter and the Apostles what they should do. Peter didn't respond by saying nothing, he told them what to do, but the key is that all of these actions take place after the Father has given a person to the Son, and not before. You see, any person can say they repent, say they believe, say they confess, show you all this by being baptized, but never receive salvation. They can go through all of these motions and never receive anything, but if you ask them if they are saved they will tell you yes, because they are trusting in what they have done. It doesn't matter what they are doing, how they are living, how much they enjoy serving God, etc. What matters is that at one point in time they prayed a prayer, or got baptized. That's what their holding onto, and not Christ. We need to point people to Christ, explaining to them that salvation only comes by the drawing of the Father. We need to tell people that the Father saves people, not you or I. Not a prayer or a silly confession from lips with no heart. People will then recognize that the question is not really what they will do with God, but what God will do with them. If they are truly regenerated by God, they will repent, believe, confess, be baptized and be saved from the wrath of Yahweh. Their salvation will be evident by the fruit that they continue to bear in the Christian walk. They will have times when they stumble, but they will never again practice a lifestyle of sin and wickedness.

Christ and Christ Alone

Let's take a little time here to speak of how a man is justified in the sight of the holy God. I realize this book is about repentance, but a foundation must be laid first so that you will grasp what you are "standing on" so to speak. There are many people in church today who are relying on their good works to get them into the Kingdom of Heaven. It's as though they believe as those in Islam. I have spoken to Muslims before and they think that Allah is going to weigh their good works with their bad ones and whichever ones weigh the most will decide on whether they will enter into their version of paradise or not. Is that how the God of Scripture does things? Does he let you in based upon the works that you accomplish, and as long as you had 100 good works and 99 bad ones you can get into His Kingdom?

People are so shallow when it comes to Theology and especially to Christology (the study of the work and person of Christ). I've had people tell me they don't want Theology or Theological studies, they just want to love God. Do you know what the word Theology even means? It is made up of two Greek words: Theos, meaning God, and logos, meaning word. When a person says they do not want theology, they are actually saying they do not want a word from God, or better put the word of God. The way the word Theology is used today has to do with the study of God. What true Christian would not want to study about God?

I say this to catapult into how a person qualifies for entry into God's Kingdom. The way a man qualifies is by being sinless, keeping all of God's commandments, every one of them, never violating God's plan or law. Do this and you will be admitted into the Kingdom. Upon explaining this to people they usually respond by saying that it is then impossible to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. My answer to this is that with men it is impossible, but with God it is possible.

If you have broken one law of God, just one, you are under a curse from Yahweh, for the law says, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law to perform them" (Galatians 3:10; Deuteronomy 27:26). Neither you nor I have performed all things that are written in the book of the law. Have you ever told a lie? If so then you are a liar. Have you ever stolen anything? If so then you are a thief. Have you ever hated someone in your heart? If so then you are a murderer (Matthew 5:21-22). On what basis do you expect Yahweh to let you into His Kingdom when you are a lying, stealing, killer?

The answer to the question is this: He lets you in because of His Son, Yeshua, whose very name means "He will save." "How does this work?" you may ask. Well, you need to know that Yahweh has not lessened his requirements for entry into the Kingdom. He still requires sinless perfection; it's just that He has decided to accept it from His Son on your behalf. He chose from the foundation of the world to send His Son as a sacrifice (Revelation 13:8) and accept that sacrifice for payment of your violations of His law. Instead of the wrath of Yahweh being poured out on you, the Son stood in your place and had the wrath of Yahweh poured out upon Him. It should have been you and I nailed to that cross many years ago. It should have been you and I having our flesh ripped from our bodies as the Roman soldiers mocked and laughed at us. Our skull should have felt thorns penetrating down into the roof of our head, causing extreme bleeding to occur. We should have been spit upon and paraded through the streets as people hollered out "Kill him, Kill him!" But Yeshua took our place. Yahweh made the one who knew no sin (Yeshua) to become sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). The wrath of Yahweh was poured out upon His Son.

This is why the Son cried out on the cross, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me!" Some people try and make this more palatable by saying that Yeshua just felt forsaken or that there is some kind of hidden understanding in the text. The truth is that Yeshua was quoting from a Messianic prophecy in Psalm 22 where the Psalmist makes it clear that the one whom the prophecy is about is truly forsaken by God. Do you know why Yeshua was forsaken by God? My children and I struggled with this one the other morning during family worship. They looked at me in despair. I had taught them that Yeshua had never broken one law of Yahweh; He was perfect, unblemished, with no guile to be found in Him. "How then Dad," they asked "could Yahweh have forsaken Him?" I explained to them that it was because

the sins of His people (Matthew 1:21) were laid upon His back. Yahweh laid upon Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6). He really became sin, it's not just good poetry; it really took place. If Yahweh did not forsake Him, then Yeshua didn't really become a curse for us. Remember, we are under a curse for breaking the law of God, Yeshua became a curse/sin for us (Galatians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:21), thus Yahweh would have had to forsake Him in order for our sins to really be atoned for.

There have been many men throughout history who have died on crosses. The simple aspect of crucifixion was not what was going on while Yeshua hung upon the cross. The wrath of Almighty Yahweh had been and was being poured out upon the one who took our place. What was going to happen to us happened to Christ. Yahweh was pleased to crush His Son, Isaiah 53:10 tells us. This would be absurd if it were not for understanding that Yahweh was crushing us by crushing His Son. Again, the Son really took our place.

Because of all of this we are wiped clean of sin; our slate is completely empty and there are no stains of sin there whatsoever. Does this mean that we can now enter into the Kingdom? NO. "Wait a minute!" you say, "What's the reason you went through all of that if it doesn't mean anything!" I never said it didn't mean anything; it means everything. What I explained about the Son becoming sin is 100% accurate scripturally, but that doesn't mean that it is 100% of the gospel message.

Even though we have all of our sins removed we still have no righteousness to bring to God. He doesn't only demand no sin, He demands perfect righteousness. Being innocent of sin doesn't make me righteous in the positive sense of the word. In other words, I could not stand before Yahweh and tell Him, look at how I've kept all of these commands You have given me.

This is where the life of Christ comes into play, and it is often overlooked in evangelical circles today. Children are always taught that "Jesus died for them," even though they are not always taught what that really means. Rarely, if ever, are children or adults taught that Yeshua lived for them. He didn't just come into existence as a 30 year old man and go straight to the cross. He lived on this earth fulfilling the positive requirement of keeping the law so that we might be able to one day stand before the Father, clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

I tried my best to explain this to my children in somewhat of a parabolic way I guess. I told my children of a poor family who had no money at all, yet owed a debt of \$1,000.00. The problem was the family did not have the money and had no way of earning the money. However, there was another family who had the money and made a decision to deposit \$1,000.00 into the bank account of the poor family, giving it over totally to them. When the bank teller checked the poor family's account before the deposit she remarked "I'm sorry, you do not have the money to pay

the debt.” After the deposit the teller remarked, “Why, yes you do have the money to pay the debt!”

See, after the poor family had been given the money it was looked upon as being their money. They had not worked or toiled for it, it was simply given to them by grace. This gave my children a small glimpse of how the righteousness of Christ is what we must be clothed in to be just in God’s sight. This is why Christ had to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:15). This is why He told John the Baptist, “Permit it at this time” when John argued that he should be baptized by Yeshua. Yeshua was fulfilling all that the law demanded. This is what the last part of 2 Corinthians 5:21 is speaking of when it says, “...that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Yeshua takes our sins and we take on His righteousness. Yahweh doesn’t let down His standard, He just accepts Yeshua as the substitute for His people. Anyone who will ever make it into Yahweh’s Kingdom will make it based upon this and this alone – the work of Christ. They will not make it there based upon their own works for everyone has sinned and fallen short of God’s glory (Romans 3:23). Yahweh’s awesome work of redemption through His Son assures the salvation of those who He has chosen.

Ezekiel Makes it Plain

Now, let’s get back to the working of Yahweh upon the heart of man. There is a passage in Ezekiel that I love with all of my heart and mind. I seem to get “goose bumps” when I just read it quietly. I doesn’t matter if I’m at home, work, church, in my car or whatever. I just love the text. The text is Ezekiel 36:22-33. This text has Yahweh saying “I will” or “will” about 16 times. He is telling the house of Israel that He will bring about their restoration. He specifically tells them in 26, “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.” The text is very telling in saying that it is Yahweh that will do this. Why will Israel observe His statutes and ordinances? It is because He, the Creator of man, takes out the heart of stone and puts in a heart of flesh.

Generally in Scripture when it speaks of “the flesh” it speaks of something contrary to the will of God, something that is evil, wicked, and hostile toward the commandments. Here though “heart of flesh” does not mean that at all. It is used in contrast with the former “heart of stone.” A stony heart is one that cannot be molded, shaped, and penetrated by any outside force; a fleshly heart is a heart that can respond to divine stimuli. Yahweh gives us this heart of flesh and causes us (as the text says) to obey Him. We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).

Everything we have recently covered about the Son becoming sin for us and the Son’s righteousness being imputed to our account is all purposed, planned, and accomplished by the Great I Am, Yahweh Almighty. Yahweh works in this great way to bring about the salvation of His elect people. He

makes us clean and performs heart surgery upon us because He decided in eternity past to accept the substitute of His Son in our place. Glory be to the Father for this great and awesome work of His own!

One Example of Yahweh's Work

There is a whole lot more on this issue in Scripture, and there are many more texts I could go to in order to show that salvation is wholly of Yahweh. My reason for including this section in a book on repentance is to make extra sure that I explain that repentance comes through a regenerated heart. True repentance cannot take place unless the heart has first been regenerated by the power of Yahweh. Seeing that the remainder of the book is going to focus much on works and actions, I wanted to first show forth the grace that must come about for works to ever have a chance of taking place. A person's good fruit comes forth from a seed; the seed was given increase by Almighty God, not by a man.

I would like to just show one example of this happening; it is probably one of my most favorite examples in Scripture because it is crystal clear as to what had to happen in order for a person to take heed to the teachings of Scripture. Look with me to Acts 16:13-15.

We find here that Paul and company went down to a riverside on the Sabbath day where they supposed would be a place of prayer. There they found a group of women that had assembled together, presumably for a Sabbath study. In this assembly was a woman who worshipped God named Lydia, and as Paul spoke to this group (including Lydia), the Lord opened Lydia's heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. Evidently Paul was telling her of the Messiah Yeshua, the Son of Yahweh. She was already open to the worship of Yahweh and most likely was a follower of His commandments. Even though she did not know it, she had also been given by the Father to the Son (John 6:37), and the Lord opened her heart at her appointed time to behold the Son and have eternal life (John 6:40). Lydia and her household were then baptized.

It is truly wonderful to see this example of the work of God on the heart of a person. I pray that God will open your heart to be able to understand this great truth of Scripture.

III

Inevitable Works

NOW THAT WE HAVE DISCUSSED where repentance comes from it is needful to understand that once the seed is given increase by God it grows into a beautiful tree and brings forth fruit. The power of God doesn't make a seed "produce nothing." A person who is not producing any fruit in their life

was not given increase by God at all, they only think they have been saved, but in reality are just as lost as they have ever been.

We must understand this: good works always follow the person who has truly repented. We will get to a biblical definition of repentance shortly, but first let us briefly deal with inevitable fruit. What do I mean by this? Fruit is always inevitable if there is root. If Yahweh works in a person's heart, that person will obey Yahweh in their actions, rather than sitting down and doing absolutely nothing for the Kingdom. Remember the prophecy in Ezekiel; when Yahweh places His Spirit in a person, and gives the person a heart of flesh, He causes them to walk according to His ordinances. He causes them to obey His law.

Do you know that you can tell if someone has really been saved? You can. All you need to do is watch their lifestyle over a period of time and you will see if God has given them increase. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." We must here make extra sure you understand what Paul then wrote in the next verse, verse 18, "Now all these things are from God..." All the new things that come about in the life of the person in Christ are from the Father, but nonetheless they do come forth. People who lived lives that were loathsome to the Father can be changed by the Father and do those things that are pleasing to Him. When a person has genuine repentance they will be in a process of change. I do not mean that they will change over night, but over a period of time Yahweh will conform them to the image of His dear Son. They will become more and more holy in their deeds because of the work of the Spirit of God upon their hearts.

Sometimes people get the idea that a profession of faith means that they are saved. You ask a person if they have been born again and they say something like, "Yeah, I did that." It brings to mind an old Keith Green song titled "To Obey is Better than Sacrifice." One line in that song says, "And I hear you say that I'm coming back soon, but you act like I'll never return." I get this vibe from a multitude of people who profess to believe in the Bible. They walk around every day, doing nothing for the Father, acting like a son of the devil, but "come time to go to church" they are there, putting there 30 minutes to 1 hour in for the week. And this is supposed to mean that they are saved?

Do you know what a mere profession of faith means as it pertains to your salvation? Nothing. That's right, it doesn't mean anything. If people actually read and studied their Bibles they would know our Messiah's words in Matthew 7:21 where He stated that not everyone who says to him Lord, Lord would enter the Kingdom of Heaven. We are not talking here about atheists, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, etc. We are talking here about people who emphatically declare Yeshua to be Lord. Out of these people, few will enter the kingdom.

He goes on to say that it is those who do the will of the Father that will enter the kingdom. Yeshua is not teaching a works salvation here. He is simply stating that the true believers are the ones who have a changed life; the ones whom Yahweh has placed His Spirit within. The evidence of the salvation of a person is the actions that take place in their life.

Those many who will not enter the Kingdom will come to Him on that terrible day and profess to Him, “But Lord, didn’t we prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and in Your name perform many wonderful works?” Notice here that they are trying to make it into the Kingdom by appealing to their works. Is this what a true believer would appeal to? I do not believe so. In spite of a true believer really having righteous works active in his or her life, they will understand that the works are from God and not their own. A true believer would appeal to Christ and Christ alone.

Yeshua will tell these many to depart from Him. This amounts to Him telling them – get away from me! He tells them they are workers of iniquity and He has never known Him. The Greek word here for iniquity is the word anomia. It is a word that literally means without or apart from law.

Basically, Yeshua is telling these people they are law breakers and by saying this He is pronouncing that the Spirit of God is not inside of them. They all have hearts of stone and not hearts of flesh. Notice also that Yeshua never knew this group of people. It is not that they were truly saved, but lost their salvation later on in life. No; it is that they weren’t ever truly regenerate. They never had salvation in the first place, and this is why the Son can say to them without batting an eye – I never knew you.

The point is that their profession of faith meant absolutely zero. Paul puts in like this in Titus 1:15-16, “To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed.” This is packed, let’s unload it.

Paul first states that to the pure all things are pure, but what does He mean by saying this? I believe we can understand it by reading a little further. He goes on to speak of those who are defiled and unbelieving; he says that for them nothing is pure. What this means is that their mind and their conscience is defiled. Their nature is wicked and thus they are that natural, fleshly man that we’ve already discussed. They cannot do what is pleasing to Yahweh because they are not able to please Him in their own power. This is not how it is with the pure. If you find a pure man all things are pure about him. His mind has been changed by the power of God, and his heart has been changed by the power of God. His conscience is spiritual rather than carnal. He is truly a pure man.

The next verse speaks a bit more about the wicked, defiled man by saying that they profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him. Carefully

note how the denying here is done. It is not a denial with words; these people are all saying that they know God with their words.

I was listening to a debate about the existence of the God of Scripture the other day and the atheist did not acknowledge God with his words. As a matter of fact he completely blasphemed Yahweh God by some of the things he said and he could have cared less about it. This verse is not talking about him. Paul is speaking of someone who actually makes a confession or declaration that they know God, but they really do not. How does one know the man does not know God? The man is denying God by the deeds in his life; he is detestable, disobedient and worthless for any and every good work of righteousness.

John talks about this in one of his epistles as well. He speaks of people saying that they know God, but not keeping the commandments of God (First John 2:24). John tells us that if a person does this they are a liar and the truth is not in them. John does not merely say that they have lied one time, but that they are in their nature, in their very person, a liar. This follows on the heels of what John had already stated one chapter earlier (First John 1:6). John says that if we say we have fellowship with Yahweh but we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. Notice again; there is a profession from the mouth, but a denial in the walk or the works, or you could say the fruit.

First Timothy 5:8 speaks volumes as it pertains to this. Paul is teaching here that people should provide for widows in their family and on a greater scale their family in general. Paul states this by saying that if anyone does not provide for his own and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. How does this man deny the faith? Does he shake his fist toward heaven and blaspheme God? No, the man denies the faith by his actions, and not his words. The man might blaspheme God with his words too, but words do not have to accompany the denial that is evident by his lifestyle.

I cannot help but think about the words of our Savior in Luke 9:26. He states that whoever is ashamed of Him and His words, He will be ashamed of them when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. Do you think He is speaking merely of being ashamed to say He is your Lord? No, no, no, He is speaking of being ashamed of Him in your deeds. You say you know Him and you sing to Him and about Him, but you deny Him by the way you live. Your life shows forth that your heart is unregenerate. Your life proves that you are really an unbeliever, no matter how much you say otherwise.

You may be one of these very people even as you read this book. You've been in church all your life or at least a great deal of your life, but that's where it begins and ends. You do not have a fervent desire to follow the Creator of all things. You think that the church you attend is what saves you and you do not keep any of the commandments of God out of a pure heart. If this describes you then you are a person who is on their way to experiencing the holy hatred of God. He is going to punish you severely. You must truly repent of your wicked deeds and be changed

by the Father.

IV Repentance in Scripture

EVERYTHING WE HAVE DISCUSSED UP to this point is a wonderful foundation for what I want to now cover. What is repentance? What does this word mean? When a preacher you know tells you to repent, what is the proclamation saying to you? When Yeshua the Son of Yahweh says in Matthew 4:17 to “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!” how do understand it?

As I see it there are four necessary parts to biblical repentance. Before we cover these parts I want you to understand that repentance is not optional. It is not just for the “super spiritual” or the people you think are crazy about Christ. Repentance is something that must take place in a person’s life if they want to enter the Kingdom. Why did the Messiah proclaim for people to repent? It was because the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. In other words, if you want to be a citizen of this Kingdom, repentance is in order.

Repentance must be done for your sins to be forgiven. We see this in Acts 3:19 which says, “Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” Notice that the wiping away of sins, or as some translations say the “blotting out” of your sins, comes about with repentance. Acts 17:30 fits perfectly with this by telling us that God commands that all men repent. If God requires it, it must be necessary. Acts 5:30-31 is also telling by linking repentance with the forgiveness of sins as also does Acts 2:38. Scripture is very clear on teaching that repentance is necessary and not optional.

Step #1: Asking for Forgiveness

I would now like to begin laying out what I see to be four steps in repentance. I do hope though that people will not just go through these steps ritualistically. That is not the purpose of the outline. I simply state the steps to show that a truly repentant person will have experienced these four steps in their life.

The first step is that repentance includes the asking of forgiveness. We must be willing to ask Yahweh, the one whose law we have violated, to forgive us of our sins. We see this forthrightly in Luke 17:34, “Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, I repent, forgive him.” Here we have a brother who has sinned against you, but then comes to you and does what the text calls, repent. The evident

meaning is that he asks you to please forgive him. He is sorrowful for what he has put you through and he longs for your friendship to be renewed by his apology and your forgiveness. Repentance then has to include an asking for forgiveness.

Yeshua taught us how to pray by giving us a pattern prayer in Matthew 6, often called “The Lord’s Prayer.” believe we can equally call it “The Disciples Prayer,” because the Lord was teaching His disciples how they ought to pray. His disciples, does not just mean the twelve that followed Him around. Matthew 6 is found in the middle of the “Sermon on the Mount,” and this sermon was taught to large crowds of people (Matthew 4:25; 5:1; 7:28). One of the aspects of His prayer that is pertinent to repentance is where He teaches us to ask the Father to forgive us of our debts as we forgive our debtors.

What does He mean, “Our debts”? When a man takes out a loan in this world, he incurs a debt upon himself. Scripture teaches us that the borrower is servant to the lender. If I borrow \$100.00 from a brother this means that I owe him that \$100.00 at the time we agreed payment of the debt to be made. When a man sins against the holy God, he is indebted to him. His sin incurs a penalty, and this penalty is spoken of in Scripture as a debt. As we pray to God from day to day we are to continually ask Him to forgive us of our debts (sins) just as we forgive others who are indebted (sin) towards us.

It is a must that we understand what is going on here. It takes humility to truly ask for forgiveness. I’ve had to teach my children that they need to really feel sorrowful when they do something wrong towards their brother or sister. One of my sons may treat their sisters harshly. Daddy then tells him to ask for his sister’s forgiveness, and sometimes the words come out, but the heart is not there in the least. They are saying, “Please forgive me” but they are not meaning it from within. I then have to explain to them that they have committed sin against their neighbor. Christians are to recognize that any sin committed is not only a violation against a person, but ultimately a violation against Yahweh God. I explain to my child that they have broken the holy law of our holy God, and that He will punish those who seek to practice wickedness in this earth without a penitent heart. My child then (hopefully) sees the seriousness of the wrong committed and feels the need to genuinely ask for forgiveness from the person they’ve wronged. We, as Yahweh’s children need to see the seriousness of our wrongs, and really ask Yahweh to forgive us for treating Him so harshly, and running His name “through the mud.” He is a Great King, and worthy of the most awesome worship imaginable. Yet many merely speak words to Him when asking for forgiveness.

Step #2: Extreme Sorrow and Hatred for Sin

The next step in repentance closely follows the first. When we ask Yahweh to forgive us we need to be extremely sorrowful for what we have done. We must hate what we have done with a passion. We cannot just haphazardly say a small prayer and then go back out and when the opportunity

arises do the same things over and over again. This is proof that you were not really sorrowful to begin with. There has been no change of heart. You were only seeking for a “quick fix” with God, when what He wants is for you to realize that you have involved yourself in something that is abhorrent to Him. Something that makes Him vomit so to speak.

We see this very clearly in Matthew 11:20-22, “The He began to reproach the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. Woe to you Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you.”

Yeshua had performed numerous miracles in these two cities, yet they would not repent. What did our Lord mean by repent here? Well, I assuredly believe he meant repentance in totality, but He specifically points out that repentance included “in sackcloth and ashes.” This outward expression symbolizes the purity and genuineness of repentance.

I must point out here that the text says Yeshua was reproaching these cities. This means He was defaming, chiding, and taunting them. He was very upset and horrified at their refusal to be sorrowful for their sin. They did not hate sin, and they should have. When you get a repentant heart you will hate sin with a passion. I’ve seen people in church who appear to have been moved by God and seem to be repentant, yet they can leave a worship service and go out and sin with all their might. People can actually leave a place where they sang of Yahweh’s greatness, listened to how Yahweh is a God of wrath and judgment, and yet leave and live as though He did not exist. What happened to these people while in worship? Their emotions ran high, but it was not the Spirit of Yahweh.

Sackcloth and ashes are not readily recognized by our culture today, but in ancient times it meant that a person really wanted to mourn and weep in deep sorrow. The Patriarch Jacob wore sackcloth upon hearing from his other sons that Joseph had died (Genesis 37:34). We know that Joseph had not really died, the other sons were lying, but Jacob did not know this. He really thought His beloved son had been killed by a wild animal. He was sorrowful, and he showed it.

David also commanded Joab to wear sackcloth upon the death of Abner (Second Samuel 3:31) and Jeremiah 6:26 has the prophet telling the kingdom of Judah to put on sackcloth and repent.

Sackcloth was a strong, rough cloth woven from the long dark hair of either a goat or a camel. It was very uncomfortable. I think about sometimes buying a shirt that has a tag that constantly rubs against my skin. I’ll tell you what I do; I just cut the tag out. I ask my wife, “Where is the scissors honey? This tag has got to go!” Multiply this feeling and you’ve got what it feels like to put on sackcloth. It had a very rough as well as itchy texture which did serve as somewhat of a chastisement to the body. I do not believe it is

foolish for us to even wear sackcloth today. I think it would do some people good to get into it, sit in ashes, toss the ashes in the air, and spend at least one week mourning over their wicked self. It may wake someone up to the reality of who they really are. They think they're not that bad of a person, while the truth is that if they got what they deserved Yahweh would kill them right then and there.

When is the last time you cried over your sin? We cry when we are happy about something, we cry when we lose a family member, we cry at times when pain comes upon our bodies, but do we cry over the sinfulness of our own hearts? Have you ever cried in such a way? Have you been driven to your knees in uncontrollable tears because you have had disdain for Yahweh's commands? This too is part of a full repentance.

Step #3: Turning from Wickedness

Now we come to a step that most never take; they are inclined to follow through with step one and sometimes with step two, but when they awaken to what they must do next they fall utterly short. The Bible is not vague when it comes to teaching us what repentance includes, and it does include a turning away from, a ceasing from sin.

How many of you have heard the Scripture that says something like this, "If you sin you have an advocate with the Father, Christ." Or maybe you've heard this one, "If we say that we have no sin we are deceiving ourselves." These Scriptures are at times soothing to people in the wrong way. I do believe each of the above statements, and I do recognize that a true, born again Christian can commit sin, but I believe way too many people use the above verses as clichés to justify their continuous wickedness before the Father. They quote the passages not because they are struggling with sin, and yet striving to be more righteous. The reason they quote the passage is because it makes them feel comfortable when they want to continue to do things that God will kill them for.

The two verses I mentioned are found in First John 2:1 and First John 1:8. A verse that is not usually remembered is what comes between these two verses – the first portion of First John 2:1 which says, "My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin." In other words, "Little children, you need to strive to be holy. You need to not sin. Do not transgress the law of God!" This is what John is saying to the Christian. John recognizes that the Christian is going to have battles, but that's just it, they are battles and not a lifestyle. If you live a lifestyle of sin, then quit quoting verses that do not apply to you. Instead you should be aware of verses that tell you that people who live your lifestyle will not inherit the kingdom of God (First Corinthians 6:9-10).

As I am writing this I am thinking about a radio preacher that I have listened to in the past. He is such a false prophet when it comes to what we are talking about. His view of grace is extremely warped and he will be judged by God for his false teaching. You may think that this is harsh, but Yeshua would say the same thing and Yeshua told us we could spot a false

prophet easily (Matthew 7:15-20). This man teaches in such a way that makes a person think they can just go on being the old man and be perfectly in a right standing with God. What a farce! God saves people from their sins, and the obvious meaning of that is that He saves people not to continue in their sins any longer. You are nothing more than a liar if you believe you know God but do not obey His laws. You will have your part in the lake of fire if you do not fully repent.

How do I know that repentance includes a turning from wickedness? Turn your Bible to Matthew 12:41. Yeshua has just told the people listening to Him that they are wicked and adulterous. He continues by saying that the men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment and condemn His generation, because those in the city of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, but they (His generation) will not repent at the preaching of the Son of Yahweh; someone greater than Jonah. Yeshua here reminds His listeners of the story of Jonah.

What happened in Nineveh after Jonah preached to the city? Jonah chapter 3 tells us that the people of Nineveh from the least to the greatest (even the King) put on sackcloth and sat in ashes and repented of the deeds done in their hands. Notice, they repented of deeds done; they were doing things that were wicked and these things had to stop. The King of Nineveh put out a proclamation. Part of the proclamation was that "...men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands" (Jonah 3:8). See, the people understood that repentance meant they had to leave their wicked ways; they had to stop doing what was detestable. True repentance will always include a turning away from wickedness.

Look at Revelation 9:20-21: "And the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood... and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts." Don't you understand this text? The author says that these people did not repent so as NOT to worship demons and other idols any longer. The people had been worshiping idols, committing idolatry, and true repentance would have meant that they stopped committing idolatry. They were supposed to put idolatry away from them.

When I witness to other people about keeping the law of Yahweh, I often bring up to them a sin which they will agree with. I do this so as to show them that they too believe in the law of Yahweh, but they may not have realized it yet. A sin that most professing Christians look upon as heinous is homosexuality. I ask people, "Do you believe a practicing homosexual will be saved?" The answer, though sometimes given kind of hesitantly, is usually no. People realize that a person, who says they are a Christian, yet remain in the sin of homosexuality, will not be saved. "Now, a person that is a homosexual can repent right?" I then ask. Everyone says yes to this. "What does that mean?" I ask. And I ask you right now; what does it mean when I say that a homosexual can repent of their sin? Do you not know that it means they

must not only ask for forgiveness, be sorrowful for the sin, but also stop practicing that sin? Of course you know this. Someone that practices sin will not inherit the kingdom of Yahweh, it is really that simple, but men make it so complicated.

Here's the problem though. Homosexuality is an easy one to swallow for me; I don't have a problem with the sin. But it's not just homosexuality that I need to be worried about. It's not just as though there was one big sin that we shouldn't practice and that's homosexuality. No, it's all sin; we must fight all sin. Our bodies must be conformed, by the Holy Spirit, to the image of the dear Son of God. This means that a thief must stop stealing, a murderer must stop murdering, and adulterer must stop committing adultery, a parent hater must stop hating their parents, a Sabbath breaker must stop breaking the Sabbath, a wife beater must stop beating his wife, a child neglecter must stop neglecting his child, a gossip must stop gossiping; you get the picture don't you? Or are you just going to limit it to homosexuality?

We have a tendency to think that other people are more wicked than we are, and they are the ones that need repentance. Their sins are the sins that will keep someone outside of the Kingdom, but our sins will be okay. We do not worry about what we feel are "little things." We do not see them as a violation of the Great King's Law. It reminds me of the people Yahweh spoke to through the prophet Malachi. Yahweh said that they had despised His name, but they asked, "Where or how have we despised your name?" They didn't even know they were despising Him. They were doing dreadful, heinous things yet they had become so immune to wickedness, they thought they were worshiping the Father in truth.

What were the priests in Malachi 1 doing that was so sinful? They were offering deficient sacrifices to Yahweh.

They were dressed appropriately, having the miter upon their head and the breastplate upon their chest. The holy linen garments were there and I'm sure they were saying all the right things. The problem though was in what they were bringing to the Father. They were bringing animals that were blind, sick, and lame. Yahweh spoke to them and asked them if they thought that even their governor would be pleased with such. He told them that He was a Great King and He deserved much better than that. He even pronounced a curse upon them for their sin. The priest had overlooked something as simple as bringing an animal sacrifice that was unblemished.

People do the same thing today. They talk a lot against homosexuality, abortion, murder, theft, etc. Yet they do not move on into completion when it comes to the removal of sin from their lives. They will forget things like loving your wife or teaching your children the commandments.

They will continue to commit the sins of gossip, slander, and backbiting and live as though they were walking in the light. People will not remember

that they are to even love their enemies, help those who hate them, and do well to those who use them spitefully. It doesn't stop with the battle against abortion folks. Yes, killing babies is a capital crime and people will be judged harshly for this activity. But you are committing sins in your life that you are not worried about right now. You need to repent or you too will perish.

Why is it that when a pastor or preacher speaks like this everyone wants to start hollering legalism? It seems that it is only legalism to people when it is a sin they do not want to give up for the King. The Bible is chock full when it comes to teaching obedience, and it doesn't matter whether you are reading the Old Testament or the New Testament, the message is the same – you need to obey God. Yeshua taught His followers, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Do you really love the Son of God? Are you just saying that you love Him, but really you are holding something back in your life that you love more? Do you know what that something really is? It is an idol in your heart that you are placing in front of the Father.

Your heart is where your treasure is, and you need to repent. Don't let someone bring you down by saying you are a legalist. Keep reminding yourself of the Scriptures that teach repentance, and quote them to yourself if you have to. personally do not care what anyone calls me, so long as my heavenly Father calls me His child.

Step #4: Works of Righteousness

I have already begun to cover this step because it is intricately connected to step three much like steps one and two. At the same time it is different enough to explain in itself, and this is that repentance includes works of righteousness. We are to repent not only of our sins of commission, but also of our sins of omission.

A person commits a sin like murder. He goes out and kills someone, and if he wants to be saved he must repent of his murder. However, let's say that a murderer repents of his murder and thus stops murdering, like Saul of Tarsus did. Does God now require something of this person? Is there something positive that this person must now do? The answer is quite simple if we quit relying on what people tell us or what a false preacher has always said. The Bible should be our sole resource.

Matthew 3:12 teaches us that John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness before the ministry of the Messiah and his message was for people to repent because the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand or near. We know from reading Matthew 4:17 that this was the message of Yeshua; people needed to repent in light of the coming Kingdom. What did John mean though by repent? Well, I certainly believe he meant all of what we covered thus far in this study, but by reading on a bit further in Matthew 3 we find that he does include works of righteousness. Matthew 3:78 has John proclaiming, “... You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance.” I

like this. John is telling the people he is speaking to that true repentance produces fruit; it is in keeping with repentance.

I really like how the Holman Christian Standard Bible translates part of this verse. Instead of saying fruit “in keeping” with repentance, it says fruit “that is consistent” with repentance. That makes much sense to me. We are to live a life that is consistent with repentance. Continuing in a lifestyle of sin is not consistent with repentance, it is inconsistent.

I have found that many older commentators of the Scripture capture the meaning of this text in a wonderful way, and I would like to share a few of them with you. Let’s first examine what John Calvin stated in commenting on Matthew 3:8:

He confirms what I have already said, that the repentance, which is attested by words, is of no value, unless it be proved by the conduct: for it is too important a matter to be estimated lightly, or at random. And so John affirms, that the solemn declaration, which they made, is not enough, but that, in process of time, their works will make it evident, whether or not they have seriously repented. It ought to be observed, that good works are here called fruits of repentance: for repentance is an inward matter, which has its seat in the heart and soul, but afterwards yields its fruits in a change of life. But as the whole of this part of doctrine has been grievously corrupted by Popery, we must attend to this distinction, that repentance is an inward renewal of the man, which manifests itself in the outward life, as a tree produces its fruit.

Calvin makes it abundantly clear that he believes repentance that is merely attested by words is useless. He states that it must be proven by the conduct of the believer. I also like how he distinguished between the “root and the fruit.” He recognizes that repentance is the outward working of the heart that has been first changed by the Father. Let’s also take a look at John Gill’s commentary.

Bring forth therefore fruits... That is, if you are truly penitent, if you have a proper sense of sin, and true repentance for it, do such works as are suitable to it, and will show the genuineness of it; for fruits meet for repentance are the same as “works meet for repentance”, Ac 26:20 and as a tree is known by its fruit, so repentance is known by good works; these are the fruits and effects of repentance, and which are proofs with men of the sincerity of it.

Gill understands that those who are truly penitent will show forth evidence of their repentance by doing works in keeping (or that are consistent) with repentance. He brings up a point that Calvin touched upon as well by stating that just as a tree is known by its fruit so also repentance is known by its fruit.

I was teaching my children the other day out of Matthew 7:15-20 concerning false prophets. I want them to be on guard for the many false prophets that

are in the world today. As they grow older I hope they can discern between the true and the false. We read where Yeshua said we would know the false prophets by the fruit that they bare. In other words, by examining their lifestyle, and also their message preached, you will know if a man is truly sent by Yahweh or if he is doing the work of Satan and leading people astray from the truth.

Yeshua called them blind leaders of the blind (Matthew 15:13-14).

We've got a few pear trees in our yard so I proceeded to ask my children how we know that these trees really are pear trees. They kind of looked at me funny, but some of them spoke up and said that we know because pears grow on them. I told them they were exactly right, and explained to them that it was very easy and simple to answer that question. It wasn't difficult at all to discern what kind of trees we had there in our yard, the fruit of the tree showed us without illusion.

Why is it then that we do not apply the same to the spiritual? Why do we proclaim people saved who do not bear the fruit of salvation in their life? You may think you are saved right now as you are reading, but I will tell you this because I love you. You are lost and will suffer the wrath of God if you are not bringing forth any fruit. You are not a child of God if works of righteousness is not your lifestyle. If you aren't progressing in holiness and sanctification then you aren't a child of God. John Calvin and John Gill would agree, not to mention John the Baptist. Let me just quote one more commentator, Matthew Poole. His words are like a cup of cold water.

You come here and thrust yourselves into a crowd of penitents, but this is not enough, true repentance is not a barren thing; neither are your leaves of external profession a sufficient indication of it, you must bring forth the fruits of holiness, fruits that may answer the nature of true repentance. The proper products of habits are called their fruits; thus we read of the fruit of sin, and the fruit of righteousness. Fruits meet (answerable to amendment of life) for repentance.

Poole hits the nail right on the head. True repentance is not a barren thing, yet so many people think that it is. They say that they've repented, they speak it every week at church, but they go on living their life as though God really did not give His Son to save them from their sins.

I was thinking just yesterday about faith or belief. Do people really believe they will suffer the wrath of God if they do not repent? I thought about people I am around in my personal life. "Surely they do believe this," I thought to myself, but then the Scriptures began rattling through my mind. If they really believed it, wouldn't they run as fast as they could to the foot of the cross and throw themselves upon the work of Christ? Wouldn't their life bear fruit in keeping with faith and repentance?

When I am working with a hammer, I really believe that if I hit my thumb with that hammer it is going to hurt. You know what that makes me do? It makes me be very careful when I am swinging the hammer. If I didn't

really believe it would hurt, I would just swing away and not care about hitting my thumb or any of my fingers. People today are “swinging away” with the life that they live. They say they believe God’s wrath is coming; they will tell you in a heartbeat that they have repented, but, as Yeshua our Messiah said, you will be able to tell the tree by the fruit it bears.

I would like to point out another Scripture that aligns itself perfectly with Matthew 3:78, and it is a Scripture that John Gill has already mentioned in passing in his commentary – Acts 26:19-20. This is a statement made by Paul the Apostle, and most know of his story. Paul was oh so thankful for the grace that Yahweh had shed abroad in his life. Paul spoke much of grace in his letters, and I have to believe it is because of the life that he lived before coming to Christ. Think about it, this man murdered people that believed in the Messiah. He stood and watched as his companions stoned Stephen, a believer in Yeshua the Messiah (Acts 7:58).

Acts 8:1 says that “...Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death.” I am shaking my head as I type this. Could you imagine what went on in Paul’s mind after he came to believe in the Messiah? Don’t you know that the thoughts of all that he had done plagued him often? Oh, how he desired that he had all that to do over again! This is why Paul wrote such Scriptures as First Timothy 1:15, “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that the Messiah Yeshua came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.”

Because of Paul’s former walk I feel that he was chosen to write some of the most amazing words about election, grace, the working of God, predestination, etc. But Paul did not only write about grace, he also believed that a truly regenerate person would show forth works of righteousness in their life. Acts 26:19-20 has Paul saying, “Consequently King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem, and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.”

What did Paul mean by “performing deeds appropriate to repentance”? I don’t see why he wasn’t speaking the same exact message John the Baptist heralded in Matthew 3. Paul recognized that repentance was a turning away from sin and a turning to Yahweh. He also realized that a truly repentant person would perform deeds of righteousness. They would begin to follow God in obeying His commandments.

We do not see the message of John the Baptist or Paul in the large majority of “Christian” churches today. You know what you hear instead, “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.” What is meant by this statement is that God wants to give you a lot of money and make you a positive thinker. This is nothing more than baptized psychology. Preachers every week teach people just to come down to the front and pray a prayer and they will be saved. Is God only in the front of the church and not in the back?

Where did anyone in the Bible teach that praying a prayer saved you? Where did all this altar call stuff come from anyway? People are so called “slain in the spirit” and doing all sorts of mysterious things that will not be found on any page in the Bible. Then the same people that experience this go out for the week and live their life for themselves rather than for Christ. They worry every day about making more and more money, being more and more successful and driving the fanciest car and living in the most prestigious house. I even saw a church sign the other day that said, “Marketing Your Church for Growth Seminar.” Do you agree with such nonsense? Do you think Yeshua would approve of such a church? Where’s Christ in all of this? Where’s the fruit of salvation? Where your treasure is, is where your heart will be also.

V

Yahweh Can Get Weary

I RECOGNIZE THAT YAHWEH IS a merciful Mighty One, and He is very compassionate and kind to His creation, but we hear an unbalanced teaching from most preachers when it comes to the attributes of God. Everybody wants to speak of Yahweh’s mercy, but no one wants to talk about His wrath. Yes the Bible says that God is love, but it also teaches that God hates. Psalm 5:5 says He hates all workers of iniquity, and we already covered earlier in this study that God loved Jacob, but hated Esau. “That’s not the God I serve!” someone may say. If that is your mindset, then you aren’t serving the God of Scripture. You are serving a god that is made up in your mind.

There does come a time when Yahweh gets weary of empty words and vain sacrifices. Yahweh wants obedience from His creatures, and when people just continuously say that they love Him with their mouth or just come to church and think that a building is going to get them into the Kingdom, Yahweh gets “fed up” to put it bluntly.

Jeremiah 7:1-11 records how Yahweh felt about the nation of Judah. He spoke to those that would enter through His gates to worship. He wasn’t speaking to people that were not entering through His gates here. Please do not try to pin this on people in the world who do not profess to believe in God. This is talking to people who make such a profession. The nation of Judah was coming to worship God, but they were trusting in deceitful words. Jeremiah 7:4 tells us what the people were saying, “Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, ‘This is the temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh.’” See, they were trusting in that temple, that building to save their souls, and they thought that so long as they came to the temple for worship everything would be okay. This is what is in the mind of most church goers today. They show up once a week for church

service and put in their hour or so as though they are clocking into a job. They are trusting in deceptive words and thoughts, thinking that such actions will save them. If the temple of Yahweh in Scripture couldn't save anybody, then I guarantee you that the buildings we call churches today will not save a single person.

Why is it that we feel this way? Just the other day I briefly spoke with an individual who was commenting to me about the death of someone they knew. "The bad thing about it," they said "is that the fellow hadn't been to church in a long time." Don't you see how this person equated going to church with salvation? I want to make it plain to everyone reading that there are droves of people who attend a professing Christian church every week who are as lost as all the prostitutes in a brothel and as all the drunkards in a saloon. Going to church is not a one way pass to the kingdom of heaven.

Yahweh goes on to tell Judah that they must truly amend their ways. They cannot continue to swear falsely, commit sexual immorality, steal, murder, offer sacrifices to Baal, and then come and stand before Yahweh expecting for Him to listen to their prayers or hear their songs. Their prayers are an abomination to Him. Proverbs 28:9 tells us that a person who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even their prayer is an abomination. That's very strong when it comes to a Bible verse. To tell someone who is on their knees crying out to the God of heaven that their prayer is detestable in His sight seems harsh, but it is Scripture. Are you one of these people? Do you only pray to God when you need help? Do you not ask Him every day to strengthen your hands and help you make it through the day? Do you constantly turn away your ear from hearing His commandments?

I was speaking to a gentleman years ago about a particular doctrinal subject that had to do with obedience to biblical law. I didn't get very far before he told me to stop it right there. He didn't want me to go any further. Why? He said he did not want to be held accountable to what I was saying, and he felt that if he turned me off before I finished he wouldn't have to give an account for the teaching. This man didn't understand that by him turning his ear from hearing the Scriptures he immediately placed himself into accountability. Hosea 4:6 teaches that people who reject knowledge will be rejected by Yahweh.

Isaiah 1:10-15 also shows that Yahweh desires pure, true worship. Yahweh told the Israelites here that He was "fed up" with their sacrifices, their festivals, and even their prayers.

He wanted true repentance from them. He told them that even though they made many prayers, stretching out their hands to Him, He would not listen. He had come to hate their Sabbaths, New Moons, and Feasts.

Sometimes I have heard brethren remark on these Feasts and New Moons mentioned in Isaiah 1 and they say that they are talking about false feasts and false new moons. Now, I agree that false feasts (Easter, Christmas, etc.) are sinful in the sight of Yahweh, but that is not what is going on in Isaiah 1. Yahweh is rather telling the Israelites that He is tired of them coming before

Him on the true New Moon and trying to worship Him on this one day or at this one time and then going out and living like hellions. People who think church saves them act the same way today. The Israelites were coming before Yahweh, bringing their sacrifices to Yahweh and singing to Yahweh, but all the while it wasn't getting the attention of Yahweh. This wasn't because Yahweh has a problem with hearing or seeing, it was that their sins had placed a barricade between them and the Most High.

He told them that their hands were full of blood and He would not accept them. They needed to wash and be made clean. They needed to truly have penitent hearts and remove their evil deeds from His sight. He told them that if they consent and obey Him they would be forgiven and He would wash their sins white as snow, but if they refused and rebelled they would be killed by the sword.

The problem though is that people just do not listen for the most part. People today are just like Israel of old. You can tell them and tell them, but they become stiffer each time. People will continue to commit abomination after abomination and wallow in sin as though it was perfectly fine. They do not realize that Yahweh's anger burns against them hotter than any flame you have ever dreamed of.

Yahweh feels the same way now as He did then. He has not changed; He knows those who are truly His. Yeshua said that His sheep hear His voice and they follow Him. Yeshua knows His sheep. Yeshua the Messiah knows those who are truly abiding in the vine (John 15:16); it is those who are bringing forth fruit. The people that He knows will enter into the final Kingdom one day. But many will hear Him say, "I never knew you" even though they thought their entire life that they really did know Him and that He really did know them. You might hear those words on day, and it will be too late. It will be a great day for the righteous, but it will be a terrible day for the wicked. Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is coming.

True Repentance

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All Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

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