



# Theological Studies Vol. II

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## CHAPTER 54

# Repentance

This lesson, one of the doctrines of Soteriology, deals with the doctrine of *Repentance*. Repentance is a very common term in the word of God, and it basically means a turning from or a change of mind (or a change of attitude) about a thing. Under the Old Testament order of law and sacrifices, the people confessed their sin, offered a sacrifice, and then often returned to repeat the sin and the sacrifice. This went on for years and years in the Old Testament, which is manifest by Hebrews chapter 10 which speaks about the offerers having to come back to get their consciences repeatedly cleared from the same thing.

“Gospel Repentance” is turning from sin and turning to God. It is best illustrated in Acts 20:21, where Paul said, **“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”** It is called **“repentance unto life”** (Acts 11:18) because the new mind is not merely to depart from evil (which is the Old Testament sense) but to obtain life that is found in Christ, and this eternal life does not show up until Christ shows up.

When Paul writes in **“hope of eternal life”** (Titus 1:2), he is not talking about anybody in this dispensation “hoping” they have it. He is talking about the fact that throughout the Old Testament they looked forward to and hoped it would show up. This is very apparent by the fact that Titus 1:3 says in **“due times”** it had been made *manifest*.

Repentance has a little different connotation on it in the New Testament than the Old Testament. Basically, the word means to turn from something or have a change of mind (or heart or attitude) about something. In this respect, *God* is spoken of as repenting and *not* repenting. For example, when Moses was praying to God and interceding for the people of Israel and the Lord told Moses on Mt. Sinai in Exodus 32:10 that He would consume them, Moses tells the Lord, **“repent”** (Exod. 32:12). That is, “Have a change of mind about what You are going to do.” You will find exactly the same thing in Genesis 6:6, where **“it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth.”**

Repentance in its basic, rudimentary, and fundamental meaning is not necessarily a turning from *sin* but a change of mind and attitude about a thing. The same God who said, “I repent that I made man upon the earth,” said, **“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”** (Num. 23:19).

Now, God does not repent of anything that He said that is *fixed*. If God says something and swears by Himself a certain thing is to be or will come to pass, there is no *repenting* or “shadow of turning” from it (Heb. 6:13). It will come to pass. But we read in the Bible where **“God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not”** (Jonah 3:10).

We read about Jeremiah preaching to the children of Israel, and the Lord saying to the children of Israel, through Jeremiah, if they don’t do this and that, He would bring *evil* upon the people (Jer. 22:3–5). When the Lord repents of *evil*, it is never a reference to the Lord turning from *sin*. It is a reference to God changing His mind *about bringing evil to pass upon the subjects of His condemnation or wrath*. The serious student of the Bible should get that very clear, because many of the theological stumble-bums who ransack the Scriptures to try to prove their own particular beliefs have a habit of just ignoring what the Book says. When the Bible speaks of God repenting of the “evil” that He would do, it has no reference to God turning from sin that He was about to commit. It rather has to do with God changing His mind about some evil that He was going to bring to pass on

somebody who *wasn't* repenting.

Repentance means basically “to turn from,” especially a change of mind or heart attitude about a thing. In the New Testament this repentance is called “**godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of**” (2 Cor. 7:10). As it is not to be repented of again, it means that no one is to return again to that sin. And it also infers a changed attitude toward sin, and (above all) it means that once you are saved you cannot repent and get saved again. Of course, this is brought out in a hypothetical way by the writer of Hebrews 6:4–6, when he said it is impossible for those who once had done certain things to “**renew them again to repentance.**” In plainer words, the reason why many Charismatics are worried about the “unpardonable sin” is they’re afraid they have committed it in their own lives. That is why they often accuse others of having committed it when they disagree with them.

You will find that many of the people who talk the most about “blaspheming the Holy Ghost” are quickest to assume that somebody else has committed it, because they have got a bad conscience about it *themselves*. Those of us who are saved, regenerated, and born again by the Holy Spirit never give any consideration at all to a pre-crucifixion passage given to Jews on the “unpardonable sin.” That is not one of our problems, *and it is not going to be one of our problems*. However, when a man receives the Holy Spirit and then goes through an emotional experience and gets “another spirit,” pretending the *second spirit* is the Holy Spirit and rejecting the teaching of the New Testament that he received the Holy Spirit when he got saved (Gal. 3:2), then he is always worried about “blaspheming the Holy Ghost.” This is characteristic of the demonic type of Christian which we have in America today, who is led and controlled by unclean spirits.

Make no mistake about it. In 2 Corinthians 7:10 and Hebrews chapter 6, you are told that it is impossible for a man who is saved to go back and repent and get saved again. It is impossible. When a man is saved, he is saved, and if he’s not saved, he’s not saved, and that is all there is to it.

Repentance, from a *negative standpoint*, is not merely *sorrow for sin*. There are many who weep over sin without repentance and immediately return to the same sin. “Doing penance” is certainly not *repentance*, for it gives the sinner some merit to earn in order to gain salvation and often *hinders* true repentance. Judas Iscariot (Matt. 27:3–5), Esau (Gen. 27:38; Heb. 12:16–17), Balaam (Num. 22:34), and Saul (1 Sam. 15:24) illustrate false repentance.

When people try to get saved by Acts 2:38, they go through this false “plan of salvation” and “repent”—as Esau which does not work; as Judas Iscariot which did not work, as Saul which did not work, and as Balaam which did not work. Balaam repented of his sins and said, “**I have sinned**” and went to Hell (Jude 11–13). Saul said, “**I have sinned**” and was rejected and went to Hell (1 Sam. 15:23–24, 28:16). Judas Iscariot said, “**I have sinned**” and went to the bottomless pit (Acts 1:20, 25; Rev. 9:11). That is the way the snow blows. Pharaoh said, “**I have sinned**” (Exod. 9:27) and died and went to Hell (Rom. 9:17, 22). There is a great deal of difference between real repentance and the modern repentance that is based on the Messianic message to Israel in Acts 2:38.

In Acts 2:38, Simon Peter is telling *the nation of Israel* (Acts 2:5, 14) to repent of their sin of *rejecting the Messiah* (Acts 2:22–23). There was not one word said in Acts chapter 2 about a man repenting of the sins he had committed that were driving him to Hell without the righteousness of Christ’s finished atonement: *not a word*. This explains why people who repent and are “bup-tized” according to Acts 2:38 never *repent*. Because evangelical repentance is not sorrow for what you have *done*. Evangelical repentance is sorrow for what you *are*.

Notice how clearly this is demonstrated in the Bible in the case of Simon Peter (Luke 5:8), Job (Job 42:6), and Isaiah (Isa. 6:5). Notice how clearly and vividly the Holy Spirit draws out to your

attention, regardless of your feelings about it, that there are *two kinds of repentance*; one of them works death because it is the sorrow of this world (2 Cor. 7:10). The other works salvation **“not to be repented of”** because it is **“godly sorrow.”**

The kind of repentance that is the sorrow of this world that worketh death is when you are sorry for what you have DONE and confess it. Biblical repentance is being sorry for what you *are* and accepting Christ because you YOURSELF are no good. That is the difference.

We have many of these foxhole conversions and auto wreck repentances where the man comes out and says, “If it weren’t for the good Lord, I know I wouldn’t have made it,” and of course all that is immaterial. A man says, “I let Christ come into my life,” meaning I took the part of the Bible I believe in and threw the rest out and confounded the Scriptures and screwed them all up so I could make a living. We are not talking about that. We are talking about being sorry for what you ARE. For example, when Isaiah ran into God, he didn’t say he had done anything wrong. He said, **“I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.”** When Job had a head-on collision with Deity, he didn’t say, “I am so sorry I made a mistake and said the wrong thing.” He said, **“I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”** When Simon Peter gets right, he says, **“Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”**

It is not a confession of sin that marks repentance. It is a turning *from sin* and *turning to Jesus Christ* by faith and receiving the promise of the Spirit by faith, because the promise of the Spirit is never given through water baptism one time *after* Acts 2:38 in any Bible in print.

There is a necessity for repentance. From a positive standpoint, there is a change of mind that leads to a change of conduct. All need to repent because all are guilty in God’s sight. In Luke 13:5, the Lord says, **“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”**

In Jesus Christ’s first sermon after being baptized (and His testing in the wilderness), He said, **“Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”** (Matt. 4:17). In the very first message John the Baptist preached to Israel after the times had worn on and the end of time was nearing and the Messiah was about to be sent, John the Baptist says, **“Repent”** (Matt. 3:1–2). Repentance comes before believing: **“Repent ye, and believe the gospel”** (Mark 1:15). Repentance comes before forgiveness: **“repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations”** (Luke 24:47), not just Israel.

This explains why God had to correct Simon Peter in Acts chapter 10 when he began to preach to the Gentiles. Simon Peter was all ready to pull his Jewish formula from Acts chapter 2 on Cornelius when the Lord interrupted the sermon and showed that Acts 2:38 was no longer the way to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44–45). Simon Peter, going by the information he had at that time, did right and did what God had showed him, but God had to show him additional information. This is why all unsaved elders and pastors try to teach their congregations that Acts 2:38 is the plan of salvation: *because God changed it*.

If that seems strange to you, I would suggest you study the Bible instead of sitting around and scratching your head. The Lord “changes not” in His dealings with Israel (Mal. 3:6). **“The gifts and calling of God are without repentance”** (Rom. 11:29). But God very often changes His *method*. He healed one blind man with spit and mud, but He just touched the eyes of another one, and He just spoke to another one (John 9:6; Matt. 9:29; Mark 10:52). One didn’t get healed of his blindness until he left Christ and went on his way (John 9:7).

In Acts 2:38, Simon Peter—preaching to an audience of circumcised, Sabbath-observing, Temple-worshipping, pork-abstaining Jews—tells them the only way they can get the Holy Ghost is

by repenting and being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. When he goes to preach this to all nations, according to the commandment of Luke 24:47, the Lord interrupts his message and shows him, “I’m not dealing with Gentiles in that fashion.” No pagan Gentile in the history of the universe was ever saved according to Acts 2:38. There is not one case from Acts chapter 3 to Acts chapter, 28 where any Gentile was ever told, **“Repent, and be baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”** There is not one case.

You say, “Well, I’ve heard that preached all my life.” You are living in the Laodicean church period. You are living in the day and age when the preachers don’t study the word and don’t believe the word, and when they do preach, they abort and confound the word to back up their own belief. You are not living during a period of great revival and Bible study. Why, these little, emasculated feather-dusters up and down the country that people are reading these days—*they’re not Bibles*. You say, “How do you know they’re not?” By what people get from them when they read them.

Anybody who can read knows that no Gentile in this world was ever saved according to Acts 2:38. Anybody knows that who can read third grade English. When the Gentiles were saved in Acts chapter 10, under Simon Peter’s preaching, they received **“the promise of the Spirit by faith”**—before they were baptized in water (Acts 10:44–48). And there has not been a Gentile saved, before or since, according to Acts 2:38.

In Simon Peter’s message to Israel in Acts 2:38, he is talking about the repentance of a nation for rejecting the Messiah. Among the nations, it is the repentance and forgiveness of sins preached in Christ’s name (Acts 10:43) and the Gentiles receiving the promise of the Spirit by faith (Gal. 3:14).

God commands repentance. **“And the times of this ignorance God winked at”**—the Old Testament times, when God tolerated or put up with image worship—**“but now commandeth all men every where to repent.”** To repent of *what*? The context of Acts 17:30 is men worshipping images and idols instead of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4).

Repentance, then, is a very prominent subject in the Scriptures, being mentioned over a hundred times in the Bible. Repentance, as we have said before, was the theme of John the Baptist. **“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye”** (Matt. 3:1–2). When Jesus sent forth His disciples before the crucifixion to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, He commanded them to preach repentance: **“they went out, and preached that men should repent”** (Mark 6:12).

At Pentecost, where Jewish apostles were preaching to a Jewish audience of Sabbath-observing, temple-worshipping, pork-abstaining, bearded, circumcised Jews, Peter tells them, “If you want to know what to do in view of the fact you have crucified your Messiah, repent and be baptized, every one of you.” This was the message of the apostle Paul—the *repentance* part—although of course he nor anybody else ever quoted Acts 2:38. There is no case in the New Testament where anybody ever gave anybody Acts 2:38 as the plan of salvation *after* the Pentecostal message to Israel. And, of course, you couldn’t be saved if they gave you the message because you are to receive the promise of the Spirit by *faith*, not *water baptism* (Gal. 3:14). In Acts 20:21, however, Paul certainly preaches *repentance*.

It is the burden of the heart of God that all should repent, because in 2 Peter 3:9 we read that the Lord is **“not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”** Failure to obey God in this matter will lead to eternal damnation according to Jesus Christ, who said in Luke 13:3, **“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”** Then no doctor or lawyer is exempt from the commandment. No man is exempt simply because he makes \$150,000 a year. He doesn’t put you in

any class outside the class of a hippie, or junkie or hustler or prostitute or bum or pusher when it comes to sin. When it comes to sin, the apostle Paul said, **“There is no difference”** (Rom. 3:22). You may like to think there is, but **“there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”** (Rom. 3:22–23). Therefore, **“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”**

Now, these commandments are clear. Repentance is commanded by God of all men *everywhere*. NOBODY IS EXEMPT. You say, “Repent of what?” Repent of your devilment, repent of your meanness, repent of your laziness, and repent of your stubbornness. Do you want me to tell it like it is and name them? (You have to name things to people these days. They have had so much positive slop about “sharing Christ” and “sharing their experiences” and “the love of God” that they don’t even know what they are to turn from and turn to anymore. They’ve got the blind staggers.)

Repent of your laziness in studying the word of God, repent of your indifference for souls and not going out and trying to win people to Christ, repent of your cowardice in not telling unsaved people they’re going to Hell and instead waiting for someone to get saved and then trying to talk him out of his salvation by a lot a blabbing about the Holy Ghost that you don’t understand and the preacher who taught you doesn’t understand either.

Repent. Turn from your sins! That is what this nation needs.

Quit lying to foreign powers in order to get on their good side quit selling weapons and ammunition to people to shoot each other with and then go around talking about “peace.” Repent! Quit *mixing people* in social and racial groups that *don’t want to be together*, thereby fomenting riot, broken bones, bruised bodies, bleeding hearts, and hospital bills just because you think international socialism is sane. Repent!

Do you understand what “repentance” means? It means “to turn from your devilment.” Turn from your wickedness. “Quit your meanness.” Are you beating up your wife? Cut it out. Are you neglecting your children? Start helping them out. Are you not praying in the home? Start praying in the home. Amen. Amen. *Amen!* Are you too yellow to put out a gospel tract? Start putting them out.

Do you understand what repentance means? Repentance is negative: it means “quit it.” It means *verbotten*: “don’t do it.” It means God talking to you like a dogmatic dictator and you resenting it because of your rotten, mean, depraved nature. That is what it means. Repent! Quit your drinking, quit your cussing, quit fouling up your lungs with cancer, start paying your bills, quit telling your dirty jokes. *That* is what it means.

Do you understand what repentance means? Do you want it any clearer? Bless your soul, you could turn on the radio for fifteen weeks and never hear a message on repentance. Get the boob tube out of your living room. Get those dirty records out of your house with all that African Rock on them that you thought was “Christian” because some guy who sang it that thought he was located near Graceland someplace. *Repent!* Do you know what it means? It means quit your cowardice, quit your meanness, quit your laziness, quit your stubbornness, quit getting upset when you are told the truth, start loving the people you don’t agree with, forgive the people that have injured you. Repent. **“God...commandeth all men everywhere to repent.”** Turn from your sins. That is what he is talking about. Do you understand it? Do you want it any plainer? Do you want me to draw a picture? I’ll draw you one.

Repentance, as touching *the intellect*, means to change your mind. In Matthew 21:29, the young son said, **“I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.”** Repentance is a revolution touching your attitude, your views toward sin, your views toward righteousness, and especially your views toward Bible translations and Bible versions. *Repent!*

Repentance teaches a Christian to hate sin and learn to love the truth of God. The prodigal son

repented. He changed his mind about living in a far country and decided to return to his father's household as a servant. When Peter at Pentecost asked the nation of the Jews to repent, he meant for them to change their minds about rejecting the Messiah. From considering Jesus a mere man, a blasphemer, or imposter, they were told to change their minds and recognize Him as the Messiah sent to Israel to be their anointed leader.

As touching the *emotions*, repentance means that you sorrow to *salvation*: godly repentance. Very often feelings play an important part in repentance. Repentance is a hard battle. I wouldn't tell you anything I've written in the last few pages is easy. It's not easy for a man who has been spending all his nights watching New York and Hollywood and Chicago to throw that idiot box out of the home. That isn't easy; there's nothing easy about it. It's not easy for you to bust up fellowship with your mother and father because they are being led by the Devil to reject the word of God. That's not easy. It's not easy to have to leave the church where you were raised because that church is now supporting modernism, liberalism, and apostasy and is taking its offering to support revolutionary groups to kill each other in Africa. It's not easy. I never said it was easy.

God never said it was easy to do right or think right or act right or talk right. You were taught *that* in school. You were taught that it is easy to do right as long as you don't hurt anybody. You were taught by a bunch of people that ought to have their heads looked at. IT HAS NEVER BEEN EASY TO DO RIGHT. It is going to cost you income to do right. Do you understand? (I believe you understand now. Get in that billfold, and I think we will get on common ground. **"The love of money is the root of all evil"** [1 Tim. 6:10].) It is going to cost you something, brother, to put up with the truth, tolerate the truth, hear the truth, preach the truth, *believe* the truth, and *practice* the truth. If you think it can be done easily, it is because you have so watered down the truth, denied the truth, perverted the truth, and ignored the truth that you think you are doing right when you are not.

Let me tell you something. Christ said, **"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me"** (Luke 9:23). Do you think *that's* easy? Christ said a man that follows Him *denies himself* and takes up a *cross*. Do you think it is easy to get nailed to a cross? Oh, we have got a bunch of Christians these days, boy! We have got them in their pretty little clothes and their pretty little cars, with their pretty little songs and their pretty little smiles, talking about "sharing their experiences" with Christ "coming into your life." How about that whip and those nails, son? Do you know anything about that? How about that blood, sweat, and tears and that spit running down the face? Have you been along there? Well, that's where they go that follow Jesus Christ. Some of you must have been following the wrong "Christ" (Mark 13:22). You must have invented the *Christ* you're talking about that "comes into your life."

*Repentance is not easy.* In Luke 10:13, Jesus said about Tyre and Sidon, if they had repented they would have repented sitting in sackcloth and ashes. In Luke 7:44, the woman who was demonstrating repentance washed Jesus' feet with her tears. The publican in Luke 18:13 smote his breast, indicating sorrow of heart. In Psalm 38:18, David said, **"I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin."** It doesn't always have to include tears and terrible sorrow, but very often it does.

As touching the *will*, the Hebrew word for repentance means "to turn from." The prodigal son said, **"I will arise,"** and he arose. As a man said, "Repentance is a crisis with a changed experience in view." Paul talked of repentance as an experience rather than a single act. Repentance is twofold (Acts 20:21); one: turning from sin; two: turning to God.

The essence of SIN is departure from God—like the prodigal son—the essence of REPENTANCE is returning to God. Turning from sin without turning to God is *reformation*; that is



not *regeneration*. If you turn from sin without turning to God, you are simply in a temporary state of abeyance before the ax finally falls. Paul said about his converts in Thessalonica that they **“turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God”** (1 Thess. 1:9). In Acts 26:18, he said his commission was to take people and **“turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.”** Repentance is no good unless it is repentance to God.

How is repentance produced? Basically it is produced by the Holy Spirit convicting of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16: 8). In this sense, it can be said that God grants it (Acts 11:18) because it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

In 2 Timothy 2:25 we read, **“if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”** As people hear the message of the Gospel, the Holy Spirit convicts them of their sin and gives them a desire to repent and turn from their sins and trust Christ. Jonah preached repentance to Nineveh. They believed the message and turned to God. The Bible says, **“the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance”** (Rom. 2:4). The Lord said, **“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent”** (Rev. 3:19).

The *results* of repentance are apparent. All Heaven rejoices. **“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance”** (Luke 15:7). It brings pardon and forgiveness of sins (Isa. 55:7). Repentance does not cause one to *merit* forgiveness. Repentance is a condition for *receiving* forgiveness. Repentance prepares a man for pardon, but it doesn't *entitle* him to it. The *pardon* comes from the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross. The Holy Spirit then, when He comes into the body of the penitent believer, gives him assurance of the knowledge that his sins are forgiven, that he is in Christ, that he is regenerated, and that he is born again. All the blessings of the Bible follow the true believer's initial repentance God-ward.

A redeemed sinner should never cease to be a penitent sinner, and should, from time to time, check upon his life and turn back from his individual sins, confess them, judge them, and turn again to God to stay in fellowship with God. For **“if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”** (1 John 1:7).