

## Repentance

### Definitions:

In the New Testament, every time the word “repent” is used by John the Baptist, Jesus, the Apostles and/or the Lord in His admonishing the 5 churches that are in error, as described in Revelation 2-3, the same Greek word metanoeo (Strong’s #3340) is used.

Greek word (Strong’s 3340) translated repent or repented all 34 times that it is used is a verb defined as

- (1) to change one’s mind, i.e. to repent
- (2) to change one’s mind for better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one’s past sins.

In considering synonyms of the Greek word translated repentance, 3340 refers to a “change of choice”. It refers to the “entire life” changing.

It is to be contrasted with the Greek word metamellomai (Strong’s #3338) that is also translated repent the six times that it is found in the New Testament. This latter word is used to refer to an individual experiencing an “emotional change”, which ultimately amounts to nothing, even though that emotional change may amount to “regret even amounting to remorse.” This latter Greek word is the one used to describe what Judas Iscariot did after he betrayed Jesus. Matthew 27:3. Another related example is Esau and how he found no place of repentance though he “sought it carefully with tears.” Hebrews 12:17. It is interesting to note that the Greek words translated “sought” it “carefully” with tears essentially mean to demand or require. This is in stark contrast to true repentance where you know you do not deserve the mercy that you are requesting, but you ask in abject humility, hoping in the unmerited mercy of God.

**John the Baptist’s Ministry.** Matthew 3:1-12, Mark 1:1-8 Luke 3:1-20.

Mt 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Mr 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

Lu 3:3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

Lu 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to [our] father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Essentially what you see in John the Baptist's ministry is that he is proclaiming how Israel is out of the way (i.e. outside the way of the Lord) and they need to repent if they are going to come into God's grace (i.e. enter into the ways of the Lord) that they may partake of that which Jesus is about to bring.

### **Jesus' Ministry**

#### 1. Preached Repentance from the outset

Immediately following His temptation by the devil in the wilderness, the Scripture teaches:

Mt 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say,  
Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Mr 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God  
is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

He also spoke of the joy in heaven that is expressed over one sinner that repenteth. See Luke 15:1-10 below. He then follows it with the story of the Prodigal Son in verses 11-32.

- 1 ¶ Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.
- 2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.
- 3 And he spake this parable unto them, saying,
- 4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?
- 5 And when he hath found [it], he layeth [it] on his shoulders, rejoicing.
- 6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together [his] friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.
- 7 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.
- 8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find [it]?
- 9 And when she hath found [it], she calleth [her] friends and [her] neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Preached that He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.  
Matthew 9:13, Mark 2:17, Luke 5:32

2. Jesus corrected those Israelites who saw themselves as better than those who had perished saying

Luke 13:1-5

1 ¶ There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, Nay: but, **except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.**

4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

5 I tell you, Nay: but, **except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.**

3. Jesus tells the story of Lazarus and the rich man. Luke 16:19-31

Lu 16:30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

4. Jesus proclaims “woe” unto the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done because they repented not. See Matthew 11:16-24 and Luke 10:13-15, generally. In Matthew 11:20-24, Jesus said:

20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

5. Jesus preaches that an “evil generation” seeks a sign and that no sign shall be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas, prophesying how the Ninevites, who Jonas preached to, and the queen of the south (referring to the Queen of Sheba who came from afar to hear Solomon) shall rise up in judgment with this generation because they repented at the preaching of Jonas and Solomon and He was greater than they. See Luke 11:29-36 and Matthew 12:38-42.

6. Christ’s Disciples Commissioned to Preach Repentance During His Life

a. **Jesus sends the 12 out.** Mark 6:7-13.

Mr 6:12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

b. **Jesus sends the 70 out.** Luke 10:1-12. To those who receive them not, Jesus instructs them to:

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

12 But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

Telling them that:

16 He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

7. Christian duty to forgive repentant sinner. Luke 17:3-4. See also Matthew 18:21-35 (Peter’s discourse with Jesus about how many times he should forgive his brother.)

Lu 17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

Lu 17:4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

## Jesus Post-Resurrection

He ministered to the twelve, after He had appeared to Mary Magdalene and then the two as they walked. See Luke 24:36-53 generally and verse 47 particularly.

Lu 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

## Book of Acts

1. Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:14-41

Ac 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Jews responsible for Jesus' death forgiven and received the promise of the Father, namely the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the same day.

2. Peter's sermon in temple after healing the beggar at the gate called beautiful. Acts 3:1-26

Ac 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

3. Peter ministering before the council (Acts 5:26-42) where Gamaliel's counsel saved them, said (referring to Jesus):

Ac 5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

4. Peter ministering to Simon the Sorcerer, who Philip led to the Lord concerning his desire to purchase the Apostles authority to lay hands on believers to impart the Holy Spirit.

Ac 8:22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

5. Peter testifying of the Holy Ghost falling upon the Gentiles to the Jews. Acts 11:1-18. See verse 18 in particular.

Ac 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

6. Paul's message to the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia concerning Jesus as set forth in Acts 13:14-41. In verse 24, he refers to the ministry of John the Baptist.

7. Paul's Sermon to the Gentiles on Mars' Hill in Athens

Ac 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

8. Paul ministers to believers in Ephesus who only knew John's baptism of repentance. They ultimately received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of Paul's hands.

Ac 19:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

9. Paul's parting ministry to the Ephesians, as recorded in Acts 20:17-38, on his way to Jerusalem. In verse 17-21 he described his ministry to them as follows:

17 ¶ And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

20 [And] how I kept back nothing that was profitable [unto you], but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,

21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

10. Paul's Sharing of his Testimony in his defense against the Jews before King Agrippa.

Ac 26:20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and [then] to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

### **Apostle Paul's messages to the Church at Corinth**

The Apostle Paul's joy at the Corinthians' repentance in response to his first epistle to them is detailed in II Corinthians 7.

8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though [it were] but for a season.

9 **Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance:** for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

10 **For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation** not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, [what] clearing of yourselves, yea, [what] indignation, yea, [what] fear, yea, [what] vehement desire, yea, [what] zeal, yea, [what] revenge! In all [things] ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

See also II Corinthians 12:21. In context, read II Corinthians 12:1 to 13:1-10.

2Co 12:21 [And] lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and [that] I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

### **Jesus' message to the 5 churches in Revelation 2-3.**

Church in Ephesus is to repent. Revelation 2:1-7

Re 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Church in Pergamos is to repent. Revelation 2:12-17.

Re 2:16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Church in Thyatira is to repent. Revelation 2:18-29

Re 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

Re 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

Church in Sardis is to repent. Revelation 3:1-6

Re 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Church in Laodicea is to repent. Revelation 3:14-22

Re 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

He also goes on, in the Book of Revelation, to lay out how the people that will be judged as described in Chapters 4 to the end of Revelation repented not. See Revelation 9:20-21 and 16:8-11.

Paul's message in Romans 7-8 illustrates repentance as does Ephesians 2:1-9.

### **Old Testament Examples/Usages**

Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple. I Kings 8:22-53, particularly verse 47 which states:

1Ki 8:47 [Yet] if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;

God's answer is given in II Chronicles 7:12-14

12 ¶ And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.



13 If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

In God's answer to Solomon He uses the word "turn" (Strong's #07725). It is this Hebrew Word, commonly used in the Old Testament, that is employed to connote the same meaning as repent in the New Testament. It generally means to return, come back or turn back. The antonyms also translated "turn" are (Strong's #05493) which is used to indicate a person turn aside or departing (i.e. turn aside out of the way which I command you, turn to other gods, etc...), (Strong's #06437) used to indicating turning away from (e.g. Deut. 30:17); and (Strong's #05627) used to indicate defection, apostasy or withdrawal in the sense of false prophets (e.g. Deut. 13:5)

Deuteronomy 4, verse 30-31 in particular, referring to if the people turn after having been carried away captive:

30 When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, [even] in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice;

31 (For the LORD thy God [is] a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them.

The same scenario is laid out succinctly in Deuteronomy 30:1-10, building upon the blessings and cursings of Deuteronomy 29.

In I Samuel 12:20-21, after rebuking the children of Israel for choosing themselves a king and calling God to witness against them, causing them to fear said:

1Sa 12:20 And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart;

1Sa 12:21 And turn ye not aside: for [then should ye go] after vain [things], which cannot profit nor deliver; for they [are] vain.

When Israel (not Judah) was carried away captive, it was not that God did not warn them, as II Kings 17, particularly verses 13-14 testify:

13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, [and by] all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments [and] my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

In Proverbs 1, after laying out plainly how Wisdom has her hand outstretched to the people, it says

Pr 1:23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

Jeremiah pleads with the people

Jer 26:3 If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings.

Jer 26:13 Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

Ezekial, the Watchman called of God. See also Ezekial 33.

Ezekial 3:17-21

17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked [man] shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

20 Again, When a righteous [man] doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous [man], that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

Ezekial 18:21-32

21 ¶ But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

22 All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.

23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: [and] not that he should return from his ways, and live?

24 But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, [and] doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked [man] doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

25 Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?

26 When a righteous [man] turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.

27 Again, when the wicked [man] turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

28 Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

29 Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

30 ¶ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn [yourselves] from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn [yourselves], and live ye.