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## Repentance

This lesson looks at one of the most misunderstood (or missing) aspects of Biblical evangelism – the doctrine of repentance! Perhaps as a spin-off the mega-church movements of the 1960s and 1970s or the rise of ‘celebrity salvation’ and attempts to make the Gospel more palatable, repentance has certainly become the “missing ingredient” in much Gospel preaching and teaching.

There has been considerable controversy among the Baptists over the subject of repentance, and (as always) with controversy over extremes. Today there are those who would teach that repentance is simply going from unbelief to belief, from Christ-rejection to Christ-acceptance – while others insist true repentance means that a man must yield his life completely to the Lordship of Christ if he is to be saved.

The word “repent” (or “repentance”) occurs 112 times in the Word of God. A careful study of these and other scriptures will not only correctly define repentance, but will demonstrate its necessity with regard to salvation and fellowship.

### I The Definition of Repentance

Any true definition of “repentance” must come from Biblical usage. Since the word is NOT always used in conjunction with sin and salvation, its basic definition cannot embrace only those terms – and yet it must accurately apply to them.

#### A. The “Basic” Meaning of Repentance

1. The two most common Hebrew words translated “repent” or “repentance” are:
  - a. “racham” (na-kham) – to regret, to be sorry
  - b. “schwb” (shoob) – to turn, to return

2. The main Greek (New Testament) word translated “repent” or “repentance” is:  
“Metanoeo” or “metanoia” – to change one’s mind.

**REPENTANCE is a Change of Mind resulting in a Change of Action.**

3. Read Exodus 13:17 *<sup>17</sup>And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent [change their mind] when they see war, and they return to Egypt:*
  - Change of mind – *Lest [they] repent when they see war.*
  - Change of action – *and they return to Egypt.*
4. This definition is consistence for God’s repentance.

Read Jonah 3:10 *<sup>10</sup>And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.*

- Change of mind – *God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them.*
- Change of action – *and he did it not.*

## **B. The Applied meaning of Repentance**

In the Bible, repentance most often applies to sin and salvation. While the above definition still holds true, it can be elaborated on in its application to these areas.

**1. A Change of Mind. Read:**

- a. Job 42:6 (from verse 1): *<sup>1</sup>Then Job answered the Lord, and said, <sup>2</sup>I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. <sup>3</sup>Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. <sup>4</sup>Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. <sup>5</sup>I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. <sup>6</sup>Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*
- b. I Kings 8:47 *<sup>47</sup>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;*
- c. Jeremiah 8:6 *<sup>6</sup>I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.*
- d. Jeremiah 31:18-19 *<sup>18</sup>I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. <sup>19</sup>Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.*
- e. Revelation 2:5 *<sup>5</sup> 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.*

Repentance means the sinner sees himself and sin exactly as God does. It involves agreeing with God about my sin.

## 2. A Change of Action

Repentance involves a **turning** – from something to something else.

- a. I Kings 8:48 <sup>48</sup>*And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name: <sup>49</sup>Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause,*
- b. Ezekiel 14:6 <sup>6</sup>*Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.*
- c. Ezekiel 18:30 <sup>30</sup>*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.*
- d. Matthew 3:8 (John the Baptist) <sup>8</sup>*Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:*
- e. Matthew 21:29 (part of a Jesus parable - for context read 28-31) <sup>28</sup>*But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first,*

*and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. <sup>29</sup> He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he **repented**, and went. <sup>30</sup> And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. <sup>31</sup> Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.*

- f. Acts 8:22 <sup>20</sup>But Peter said unto him [Simon], Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. <sup>21</sup>Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. <sup>22</sup>Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.
- g. Acts 26:20 <sup>20</sup>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.
- h. II Corinthians 12:21 <sup>21</sup>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.
- i. II Timothy 2:25 (from verse 23) <sup>23</sup>But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. <sup>24</sup>And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, <sup>25</sup>In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them **repentance** to the acknowledging of the truth; <sup>26</sup>And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

- j. Hebrews 6:1 <sup>1</sup>*Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; **not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,** <sup>2</sup>**Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.***
- k. Revelation 2:5 <sup>5</sup>*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.***
- l. Also read:
- (i) Revelation 9:20-21 <sup>20</sup>*And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: <sup>21</sup>Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.*
- (ii) Revelation 16:9-11 <sup>9</sup>*And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. <sup>10</sup>And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, <sup>11</sup>And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.*

Repentance is more than an attitude, it is also an ACT!

## II The Demonstration of Repentance

The Bible not only teaches repentance as a change of mind resulting in a change in action, but gives several great examples of it:

### A. The Repentance of Nineveh

1. Matthew 12:41 <sup>41</sup> *The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because **they repented at the preaching of Jonas**; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.*
  
2. Jonah 3:5-8 <sup>5</sup>*So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. <sup>6</sup>For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. <sup>7</sup>And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water. <sup>8</sup>But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.*
  - a. The people of Nineveh believed in God (faith).
  - b. They proclaimed a fast – seriousness with God.
  - c. They put on a sackcloth – grief over sin.
  - d. A mighty CRY unto God – prayer.
  - e. Turning from their evil ways – a change of action away from their evil and wicked ways.

## B. The Repentance of Nebuchadnezzar

Daniel 4 records the amazing conversion of a heathen monarch – the great Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. **[READ DANIEL 4]**

This chapter is just his personal testimony [1<sup>st</sup> person narrative by Nebuchadnezzar]. Follow his steps:

1. Nebuchadnezzar's Troubling Dream and Daniel's Interpolation. Daniel 4:4-26 <sup>4</sup> *I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: 5I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me....*
2. Daniel's Influence and Preaching: <sup>8</sup>*But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying, <sup>9</sup>O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.*

*Also, read verse 27 – a clear call to repentance: Daniel 4:27 <sup>27</sup>Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility.*

3. Nebuchadnezzar's Pride. Read Daniel 4:29-30 <sup>29</sup>*At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. <sup>30</sup>The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?*

4. God's Judgement. Read Daniel 4:31-33 *<sup>31</sup>While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. <sup>32</sup>And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. <sup>33</sup>The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.*
  
5. Nebuchadnezzar's Repentance and Faith. Read Daniel 4:34-35 *<sup>34</sup>And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: <sup>35</sup>And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*
  
6. Nebuchadnezzar's Testimony – a changed life! Read Daniel 4:37 *<sup>37</sup>Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.*

### **C. The Repentance of the Prodigal Son**

The Lord's parable of the prodigal son is a wonderful picture of repentance means and what it brings. Consider the steps involved. Read Luke 15:11-24

*<sup>11</sup>And he said, **A certain man had two sons:** <sup>12</sup> **And the younger of them said***

*to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. <sup>13</sup> And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. <sup>14</sup> And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. <sup>15</sup> And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. <sup>16</sup> And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. <sup>17</sup> And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! <sup>18</sup> I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, <sup>19</sup> And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. <sup>20</sup> And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. <sup>22</sup> But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: <sup>23</sup> And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: <sup>24</sup> For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.*

## 1. The Way of Sin

- a. Sin's demand – <sup>12</sup> *And the younger of them said to his father, Father, **give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.** And he divided unto them his living.*
- b. Sin's deception – <sup>13</sup> *And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there **wasted his substance with riotous living.***

- c. Sin's depletion – *<sup>14</sup> And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.*
- d. Sin's degradation – *<sup>16</sup> And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.*

## 2. The Way of Repentance

- a. Realization – *<sup>17</sup> And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!*
- b. Resolve – *<sup>18</sup> I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,*
- c. Return – *<sup>20</sup> And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.*

## D. The Repentance of the Thessalonians

The entrance of the Gospel into the city of Thessalonica brought remarkable changes. Notice what was involved. Read:

- I Thessalonians 1:9 *<sup>9</sup>For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;*
- I Thessalonians 2:14 *<sup>14</sup>For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have*

*suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:*

1. *They turned to God from idols*
2. *They live to serve the living and true God;*
3. *They became followers of the churches of God*

#### **E. God's Prescription for Israel's Repentance**

Read II Chronicles 7:14 *<sup>14</sup>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 II Chronicles 7:14 the LORD answered Solomon's great prayer of dedication by reiterating the provisions and conditions of the Palestinian Covenant (read Deuteronomy 28:1-30; 10). This well-known verse is a call to repentance from sin and invokes 3 steps:

1. *Shall humble themselves* – a change of mind from PRIDE to humility.
2. *And pray, and seek my face* – a realization of the only One who can hear, forgive, and heal. A turning TO.
3. *And turn from their wicked ways;*

#### **F. Esau's Vain Search for Repentance**

Hebrews 12:17 is one of the most misinterpreted scriptures on the subject of repentance. (Hebrews 12:17 *<sup>17</sup>For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*) The common understanding is that Esau wanted to / tried to repent, but either could not or

would not. (This fits in with the Calvinistic idea of God dispensing salvation and repentance to some, but withholding it from others.)

A proper interpretation (interpreting scripture with scripture) reveals a different story – one which again shows repentance to be a change of mind which leads to a change of action. Read: Genesis 27:30-38 (to conclude Esau did indeed weep and repent. But what did he weep over? **It was the loss of his blessing.**)

1. Esau found no place of repentance. Esau did not want to repent – he was profane (Hebrews 12:16 *<sup>16</sup>Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*) He wanted his father Isaac to repent (change his mind with regard to the blessing, thereby changing his actions by blessing him instead of Jacob.) But Isaac would not repent. [It is clearly implied here that Esau sustained the character of a fornicator and a profane person. The former name/title is probably given to him to denote his licentiousness shown by his marrying many wives, and particularly foreigners, or the daughters of Canaan]
2. Though he sought it carefully with tears. Read Genesis 27:

*<sup>34</sup>And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.*

*<sup>38</sup>And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.*

**Unfortunately, Esau's tears were tears of regret and remorse.**

## G. The Repentance of God

There are a number of scripture references to GOD repenting:

- Genesis 6:5-7 <sup>5</sup>And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.: <sup>6</sup>And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. <sup>7</sup>And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.
- Jonah 3:9-10 (after Nineveh revival) <sup>9</sup>Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? <sup>10</sup>And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.
- Exodus 32:12-14 (while God was mad at the Jews) <sup>12</sup>Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. <sup>13</sup>Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. **<sup>14</sup>And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.**
- Judges 2:18 <sup>18</sup>And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their

*enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.*

- II Samuel 24:16 (due to David's sins...) <sup>16</sup>*And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.*
- Jeremiah 15:6 <sup>6</sup>*Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary with repenting.*

And **NOT** repenting:

- Jeremiah 4:28 [[This chapter contains an invitation to true repentance, by promises, Jeremiah 4:1-4; and judgments coming on them by the Babylonians, contrary to the predictions of their false prophets, for their sins](#)] <sup>27</sup>*For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end. <sup>28</sup>For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, **and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it.** <sup>29</sup>The whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; they shall go into thickets, and climb up upon the rocks: every city shall be forsaken, and not a man dwell therein.*
- Ezekiel 24:14 [Judgment on Jerusalem and Judah (Ezekiel 4:1–24:27)] <sup>14</sup>*I the Lord have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, **neither will I spare, neither will I repent;***

*according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord God.*

- Zechariah 8:14 <sup>14</sup>*For thus saith the Lord of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the Lord of hosts, **and I repented not:***

And many more repenting and NOT repenting ...

This seems hard to understand at first glance – especially if we define repentance in terms of sin and salvation (since God never sins and does not need to be saved). However, if repentance is defined as a change of mind resulting in a change of action, it becomes much easier to understand how it can apply to God. When God repents, He changes His mind and does something different.

The bigger question is: HOW CAN AN UNCHANGING GOD CHANGE HIS MIND?? Let's study:

1. God is immutable (unchanging)

- a. Malachi 3:6 <sup>6</sup>*For I am the Lord, **I change not**; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. <sup>7</sup>Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. [SPEAKING ABOUT TITHES] Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? <sup>8</sup>Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup>Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.*

- b. Hebrews 1:12 <sup>12</sup>*And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.*
  
- c. Hebrews 6:17 <sup>17</sup>*Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:*
  
- d. Hebrews 13:8 <sup>8</sup>*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.*

2. God WILL NOT repent like a man. Read:

- Numbers 23:19 <sup>19</sup>*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?*
  
- I Samuel 15:29 <sup>29</sup>*And also the Strength of Israel [GOD] will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.*

3. So, how come God repents?

The answer to this perplexing question is as follows:

- a. Gods is absolutely unchanging and unchangeable in all HIS DEVINE ATTRIBUTES. By attributes we mean:
  - 1. Omnipotence – all powerful
  - 2. Omniscience – all knowing
  - 3. Omnipresence – everywhere
  - 4. His holiness, His love, His veracity (truth)

**If He changed any of these attributes, he would not be God.**

- b. Consider the example of Johan 3:9-10 (*after Nineveh revival*) <sup>9</sup>*Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?* <sup>10</sup>*And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.*
- Did God cease to be all powerful? Did He somehow lose his ability to destroy cities? NO!
  - Did God cease to be holy? Did He somehow change and become tolerant of sin? NO!
  - Did God cease to become a God of love? Not according to Jonah 4:2 ... *for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.*
- c. According to Johan 4:2 (<sup>2</sup>*And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.*), God's repentance is a function of (and within) His unchanging LOVE, and according to Genesis 6:6-7 (<sup>6</sup>*And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. <sup>7</sup>And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*), **His repentance is a function of (and within) His unchanging HOLINESS.**

- d. The context of Numbers 23:19 *<sup>19</sup>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?* The truth is the WORD OF GOD. What God has said, he will never change.
- e. When it comes to the salvation of sinners, God's truth can/will never change:
- Those who die in their sins → remain lost forever.
  - Those who believe on the SON → pass from death unto life.
- f. Thus God (by His immutable counsel) repents every time a sinner turns from sin and puts their faith in His son Jesus Christ. God changes His mind (about turning the lost man into Hell) and thus changes His action (giving the sinner eternal, everlasting life)! Thus God does this because of His unchanging holiness, love, and truth.

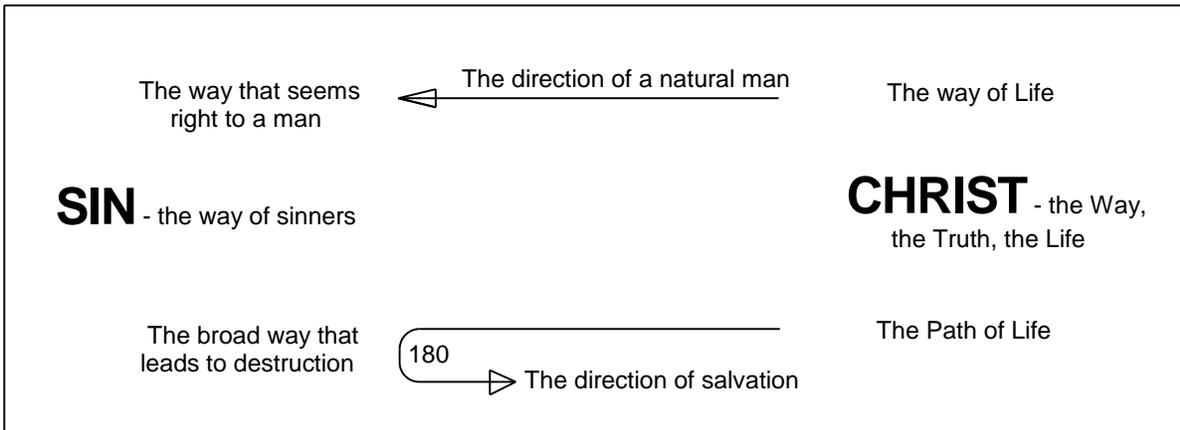
### III The “Double” of Repentance

Repentance resulting in the remission of sins (read Acts 2:38 *<sup>38</sup>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.*) is one side of a “two-sided coin.” The other side of the coin is FAITH.

- Read Acts 20:21 *<sup>21</sup>Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, **repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.***
- Read Hebrews 6:1 *<sup>1</sup>Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and **of faith toward God,***

Through repentance and faith are NOT the same thing, they are inseparable components of salvation. FAITH = believing in God's Word and acting on it.

True salvation involves a 180° turn-around - from sin (repentance) → the Savior (faith)



A man may repent and not be saved – if that repentance is not accompanied with faith in Christ. For example: a lost man may realize that a certain “sin” he is doing is self-destructive behavior and cease doing the sin (repented) but will still die in his sins without FAITH in Christ.

Read Matthew 27:3 <sup>3</sup>*Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, **Judas repented but died lost.***

Read John 17:12 <sup>12</sup> *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.* [John 17 – a great monologue by Jesus praying to His Father!]

When it comes to **salvation**, repentance without faith is NOT repentance for the remission of sins – and faith without repentance is NOT a saving faith!

There must be BOTH a turning away from sin (repentance) and a turning toward God (faith). Man cannot truly turn to Christ without turning away from his sin.

## A. Repentance and Faith Together

1. Read Matthew 21:28-32 [parable of the man with 2 sons] <sup>28</sup> *But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. <sup>29</sup> He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. <sup>30</sup> And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. <sup>31</sup> Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. <sup>32</sup> For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.*
2. Read Mark 1:15 <sup>15</sup> *And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: **repent ye, and believe the gospel.***
3. Read Acts 26:20 <sup>20</sup> *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.*

## B. Repentance and Faith Used Interchangeably

While repentance and faith are not the same thing, because of their co-dependency **they are sometimes used interchangeably.**

This explains the following passages of scripture:

1. Why the word “repentance” is not found in John’s Gospel – which was written that men might believe and be saved. (John 20:31 <sup>31</sup> *But these are*

*written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.)*

2. Why the Great Commission as stated in Luke's Gospel requires that repentance should be preached among all the nations. Read Luke 24:47  
***47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.***
  
3. The "baptism of repentance" was preached by John the Baptist (read Luke 3:3 ***3And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;***). Some have imagined this baptism of John the Baptist was something different from the ordinance practiced by the Lord's churches today.

However, notice that Baptist baptism:

- Is "called the baptism OF [because of] repentance-for-the-remission-of-sins." If we flip the coin and read "faith-for-the-remission-of sins", then it is plain to see that John's baptism was a baptism because of (following) salvation – thus identical to what is observed by Bible-believing Baptist churches today.
  
- Requires repentance and faith as a prerequisite – Read Acts 19:4  
***4Then 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.***

## IV The Demand for Repentance

The doctrine of repentance has been called the great “omission” of modern-day preaching. Too often, would-be soul winners and preachers call on men to turn to Christ without addressing the question of sin and its offensiveness to a thrice-holy God.

Repentance is to be preached – and that is something more than merely mentioning the word in the course of a sermon or Gospel presentation. Preaching repentance involves the proclamation of what it means and what God requires.

Read Acts 17:30 (from verse 29 through 31) <sup>29</sup>*Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.* <sup>30</sup>***And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent:*** <sup>31</sup>*Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

### A. No Salvation Apart from Repentance:

Read Luke 13:3, 5 <sup>3</sup> *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. ...* <sup>5</sup> *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

### B. God Desires Repentance. Read:

1. Matthew 9:13 <sup>13</sup> *But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* Jesus came specifically to call sinners to repentance.

2. Luke 15:7 <sup>7</sup> *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 15:10 <sup>10</sup> *Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*

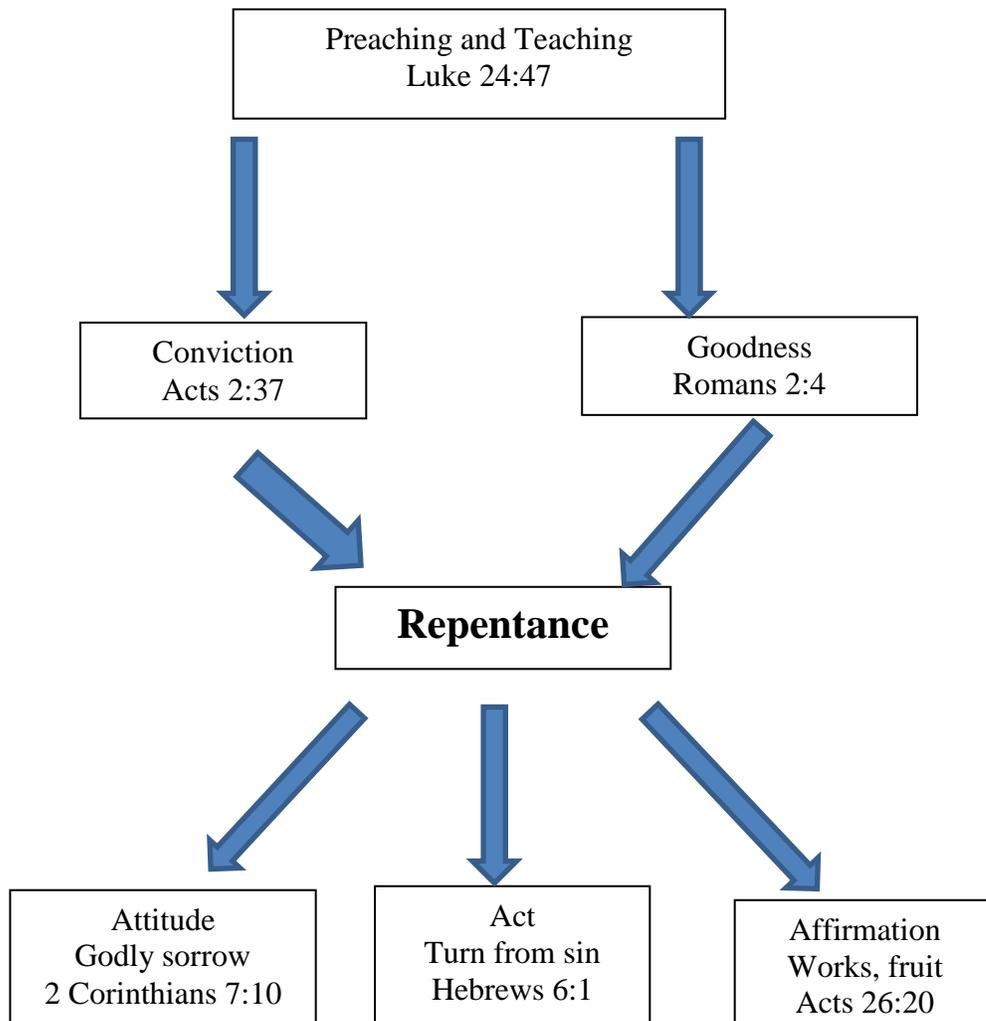
3. Romans 2:4 <sup>4</sup> *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*
4. II Peter 3:9 <sup>9</sup> *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

### C. Ancient Preaching Called for Repentance. Read

1. Matthew 2:2,8 (Preached by John the Baptist) <sup>2</sup> *And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand...* <sup>8</sup> *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:*
2. Matthew 4:17 <sup>17</sup> *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*
3. Mark 1:14-15 <sup>14</sup> *Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,* <sup>15</sup> *And saying, **The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.***
4. Mark 6:12 (Jesus sending them out 2 by 2) <sup>12</sup> *And they went out, and preached that men should repent.*

5. Acts 3:19 *<sup>19</sup>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;*
  
6. Acts 26:20 *<sup>20</sup>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.*

**V The Design of Repentance (how it comes about)**



## VI The Distortion of Repentance

There are many misconceptions about repentance as it applies to salvation.

The examples below show what repentance is **NOT**:

### A. Repentance is **NOT** Self-Reformation

A man may turn over a “new leaf” and get rid of some bad habits in his life. He may even, of his own volition, install some good things in his life. However, repentance without faith in Christ is merely reformation just as “faith” in Christ without repentance is only head knowledge.

Read Matthew 7:21-23 <sup>21</sup> *Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* <sup>22</sup> *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?* <sup>23</sup> *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

Salvation requires the Spirit’s regeneration, not self-reformation! Any attempt to change one’s life in order to be saved becomes a works-salvation.

[Remember Matthew 22:12 <sup>14</sup> *For many are called, but few are chosen.*]

### B. Repentance is **NOT** Remorse

II Corinthians 7:10 <sup>10</sup> *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*

The “sorrow of the world” is the sorrow felt over “being caught”, or a sorrow over the consequences of SIN.

Repentance may or may not involve visible tears and outward weeping. **It does involve godly sorrow over one's condition before God.**

### C. Repentance is NOT Mere Belief

Those are those who insist that repentance is merely going from a state of unbelief to belief. This is true to a point, but Revelation 21:8 list unbelief as just one among seven other sins which will consign a man to the Lake of Fire.

*Revelation 21:8 <sup>8</sup> But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

The idea of repentance being equivalent to believing on Jesus Christ ignores the sins issue. This misconception is at the heart of much of the present-day "soul winning". Methodology which focuses on getting a lost person to pray a prayer, at the expense of explaining "righteousness, temperance and judgement to come" shuts out the Spirit of God. Read John 16:8 (verses 7-11)

*<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. <sup>8</sup> And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: <sup>9</sup> Of sin, because they believe not on me; <sup>10</sup> Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; <sup>11</sup> Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

Old time Baptists based their statistics on baptisms and abiding members. Our faith must never be in a prayer – it must only be in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**D. Repentance is NOT Yielding 100% to Jesus Christ**

One of the extremes surrounding the doctrine of repentance is the teaching that a lost person must turn from their sins and yield themselves totally to the Lord Jesus Christ (a task which is an absolute impossibility for any sinner to accomplish in order to be saved.)

Read Jeremiah 13:23 "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."

This is a form of WORKS salvation.

This teaching is sometimes referred to as LORDSHIP SALVATION.

1. According to scriptures such as Romans 10:3 *<sup>3</sup>For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

A sinner must believe on the LORD Jesus Christ... i.e. he must receive Christ as his Savior and LORD. Anyone who claims to have been saved then shows no interest in doing anything Christ wants no matter how imperfectly, cannot be saved. Examples of things Christ wants: attending church, reading the Bible, following the Lord in baptism, etc.

**From Romans 10:3c A believer must submit to the righteousness of the Lord.**

2. Nevertheless, receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior does not mean that unless He is immediately and completely Lord of all, a person is not saved. This idea fails to consider facts such as:
  - a. The growth progress in Christian life. Read I Peter 2:2 *<sup>2</sup>As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

- b. The flesh principle. Read Paul in Romans 7:18 (from verse 14 to verse 21) *<sup>14</sup>For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. <sup>15</sup>For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. <sup>16</sup>If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. <sup>17</sup>Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. <sup>18</sup>**For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.** <sup>19</sup>For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. <sup>20</sup>Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. <sup>21</sup>I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.*
- c. The call to “brethren” to surrender. Read 12:1-2 *<sup>1</sup>I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup>And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*
3. Accepting the Lordship of Christ occurs the moment one turns from sin to God. Repentance involves a change of ownership – from gods to God, from lords to THE Lord. This doesn’t mean a convert immediately performs (or even knows) everything the Lord wants us to do. At the beginning, it is more of an attitude than an act, but it is an attitude which leads the believer to yield more and more of his life to the Lord day by day.

### E. Repentance is NOT Dispensed Arbitrarily by God

Using three Bible passages, some hold to a Calvinistic type of philosophy that a man cannot repent unless God allows him to. These scriptures are:

- Acts 5:31 <sup>31</sup>*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.*
- Acts 11:18 <sup>18</sup>*When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*
- II Timothy 2:25 <sup>25</sup>*In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*

The giving and granting of repentance to Israel and the Gentiles refers to the historical entrance of the preaching of the Gospel. In Acts 11, Peter was being criticized for preaching to the household of Cornelius (verses 1-3). After Peter recounted what God had done (verses 4-15), the Church realized that the door of faith (thus repentance) had indeed been opened to the Gentiles.

The giving or granting of repentance in II Timothy comes as a result of the Spirit of God working through the teaching and instruction of the Truth (the Word of God).

Acts 11: <sup>1</sup>*And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. <sup>2</sup>And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, <sup>3</sup>Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. <sup>4</sup>But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, <sup>5</sup> I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: <sup>6</sup>Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. <sup>7</sup>And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. <sup>8</sup>But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. <sup>9</sup>But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. <sup>10</sup>And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. <sup>11</sup>And, behold,*

*immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. <sup>12</sup>And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: <sup>13</sup>And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; <sup>14</sup>Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. <sup>15</sup>And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. <sup>16</sup>Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. <sup>17</sup>Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? <sup>18</sup>When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. <sup>19</sup>Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. <sup>20</sup>And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks, preaching the Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup>And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. <sup>22</sup>Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. <sup>23</sup>Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. <sup>24</sup>For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. <sup>25</sup>Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: <sup>26</sup>And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. <sup>27</sup>And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. <sup>28</sup>And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. <sup>29</sup>Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: <sup>30</sup>Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.*

#### Calvinism:

- Salvation is accomplished by the almighty power of the triune God. The Father chose a people, the Son died for them, the Holy Spirit makes Christ's death effective by bringing the elect to faith and repentance, thereby causing them to

willingly obey the Gospel. The entire process (election, redemption, regeneration) is the work of God and is by grace alone. Thus God, not man, determines who will be the recipients of the gift of salvation.

**Question: "What is Calvinism and is it biblical? What are the five points of Calvinism?"**

**Answer:** The five points of Calvinism can be summarized by the acronym TULIP. T stands for total depravity, U for unconditional election, L for limited atonement, I for irresistible grace, and P for perseverance of the saints. Here are the definitions and Scripture references Calvinists use to defend their beliefs:

Total Depravity - As a result of Adam's fall, the entire human race is affected; all humanity is dead in trespasses and sins. Man is unable to save himself ([Genesis 6:5](#); [Jeremiah 17:9](#); [Romans 3:10-18](#)).

Unconditional Election - Because man is dead in sin, he is unable to initiate a response to God; therefore, in eternity past God elected certain people to salvation. Election and predestination are unconditional; they are not based on man's response ([Romans 8:29-30](#); [9:11](#); [Ephesians 1:4-6](#), [11-12](#)) because man is unable to respond, nor does he want to.

Limited Atonement - Because God determined that certain ones should be saved as a result of God's unconditional election, He determined that Christ should die for the elect alone. All whom God has elected and for whom Christ died will be saved ([Matthew 1:21](#); [John 10:11](#); [17:9](#); [Acts 20:28](#); [Romans 8:32](#); [Ephesians 5:25](#)).

Irresistible Grace - Those whom God elected He draws to Himself through irresistible grace. God makes man willing to come to Him. When God calls, man responds ([John 6:37](#), [44](#); [10:16](#)).

Perseverance of the Saints - The precise ones God has elected and drawn to Himself through the Holy Spirit will persevere in faith. None whom God has elected will be lost; they are eternally secure ([John 10:27-29](#); [Romans 8:29-30](#); [Ephesians 1:3-14](#)).