

Repentance

TEXT: Ezekiel 18:20-32; 2 Corinthians 7:9,10

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: 2 Chronicles 7:14; Proverbs 28:13; Mark 1:15; Luke 15:7

KEY VERSE: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. — Isaiah 55:7

When Jesus began to preach, His message was, “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17). What is repentance? Who is to repent? How does repentance affect an individual? God’s Spirit causes us to understand that this message comes from Heaven and is directed to each of us. We cannot repent without God’s help. So the Holy Spirit was sent into the world to “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8), thus leading men to repentance.

1. Repentance is a godly sorrow for sin with a renunciation of it, and is necessary in order to receive salvation. What is the penalty for sin as stated in our text in Ezekiel? What does the prophet say the wicked should do?

2. The Spirit reveals sin. Without this enlightenment from Heaven one will never be able to comply with the call to repentance. One must first realize he is a sinner and that God’s judgment hangs over his Hell-bound soul. Then the Holy Spirit assures him there is hope. You aren’t doomed forever. There is forgiveness of sins through the Name of Jesus if you will repent. Using the text, the key verse, and 1 John 2:25, list the promises made to those who turn away from their sins.

3. Before Jesus came, John the Baptist preached the message, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2). He preached with such power and anointing that whole cities in that area were emptied of their inhabitants as people went out to hear him. Some did repent, others did not. There were many scribes and Pharisees who joined the crowd presenting themselves as candidates for baptism but who had not repented of their sins. John rebuked them saying, “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Matthew 3:7,8). What do you think John meant by the words in the 8th verse?

4. Many people in Christian circles today believe that once you have given your life to the Lord you are eternally secure, and that there is no way you can drop out of fellowship with Christ. In our text in Ezekiel, find a verse that refutes this idea and explain, in your own words, what that verse says. Then find a verse in the New Testament which states the same truth.

5. Many times people like to place the blame for not being a Christian on someone else. They use this as an excuse to justify themselves for living an ungodly life. From our text we realize that the blame rests upon the one who sins. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." If they continue to excuse their ungodly lives, and fail to repent, they will find that sin has negative repercussions. Briefly tell how sin ruins lives today.

6. The Lord said that He had no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He loves all mankind. It is not His will that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. He didn't say, "join a church," or "subscribe to some creed," or "do the best you can to live a good life." He said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," (Luke 13:3). What provision did He make so that the wicked would not have to die? List several Scriptures that prove the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

7. Our text in 2 Corinthians 7:9 tells us that Paul rejoiced because the people sorrowed to repentance. What is the difference between being sorry and having sorrow to repentance and what is the outcome of both?

8. Jesus said that He came not to call the righteous, but the sinners to repentance. We should understand that repentance was necessary under the Law (of which John the Baptist was a representative), but it is of no less importance under the dispensation of grace (of which Jesus is a representative). Many people think that God is so merciful that they can come to Him any time they are ready. We are warned in the Bible against presuming on the mercy of God (Psalm 19:13). Read what is said about Esau in Hebrews 12:17, and then explain why it is dangerous to put off the call of the Lord.