

Tool Box Series



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Repentance

Introduction

The nature of fallen man is to stray away from God, and even blood-bought born-again believers can stray from God. But through repentance, we turn around to get on the right track and seek God. Whether a lost soul in the pit of despair, lukewarm pew sitters flirting with the devil, or an entire nation with a cloud of judgment hanging overhead, it is only humble repentance that can move us from guilt and condemnation to becoming the object of God's mercy and forgiveness. The basic idea of repentance is to stop sinning and do what is right.

Isaiah 53:6, All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him (Christ) the iniquity of us all.

*Daniel 4:27, Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; **break off your sins by being righteous**, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.*

Definition & types of sins

What does the Bible mean by sin? Everyone can have their own opinions about what constitutes sin, and man's definition can change, usually by lowering or dropping the standards so that anything goes. The real question is, how does God define sin? We also know that God's standards are fixed and will never change.

If we are wrong about our assumptions of what God will tolerate and what he will judge, we put ourselves in eternal jeopardy. We do well to know God's precepts regarding sin and respond accordingly. We will begin with a generic definition of sin and explore more specific categories of sins that are less familiar. Here are a few Biblical examples of various sins.

Sins of law breaking & lawlessness

In our first example, many religious, self-righteous, hypocritical leaders are in for a big surprise when they stand before God. They look for rewards for all their good works, but because they did their own thing in God's name, Jesus does not know them, and their good deeds are sins of lawlessness. When we operate outside the perimeters of God's revealed will in the word of God, we are disobedient, rebellious, and lawless.

Matthew 7:21-23** "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. '**Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 'And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

John 3:4, Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

Partial obedience is disobedience, we cannot serve two masters, and it's one or the other.

Therefore, we cannot do our own thing, be worldly-minded, give room to the devil, and give total obedience to God. God commanded Saul to destroy all the Amalekites, men, women, children, and cattle, because of their wickedness. But Saul spared the best of the cattle and Agag the king but boasted that he obeyed the command of the Lord. Saul's partial obedience was disobedience, rebellion, and witchcraft.

1 Samuel 15:22-24 Then Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king." Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.

Sins of wickedness & unrighteousness

All wrongdoing, evil, and wicked actions and words can be sins. Even if nobody else is affected or knows about it, a secret sin is still a sin. When Potipher's wife tried to seduce Joseph, he rejected her because he did not want to commit wickedness against God. Joseph was saying that all sins are against God. Adultery and all kinds of sins can be hidden and kept secret from man, but there is nothing hidden from God.

1 John 5:17, "All unrighteousness is sin."

Genesis 39:9, (Joseph speaking to Potiphar's wife),
"There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has
he (Potiphar) kept back anything from me but you,
because you are his wife. **How then can I do this
great wickedness, and sin against God?"**

Sins of omission

Sometimes sin is not what you do but rather what you did not do. Look at the example of the sheep and goat judgment, the sheep receive rewards for what they did, but goats get judged and condemned for what they did not do.

James 4:17, *Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*

Matthew 25:41-43 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, '**Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'**

Also, for the priest, prophet, and judge Samuel it would have been a sin to stop praying for Israel. If we know what we should do, there are no excuses for not doing it.

1 Samuel 12:23 "Moreover, as for me, **far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.**

Sins against the conscience

The conscience is a delicate instrument designed to sound alarms in our soul if we get too close to sin, or if we have sinned, the conscience will sound alarms until we change directions. That is if we have not shut off or damaged our conscience. Whenever we go against our conscience and sin, we put our spiritual life in peril. The same is true if we knowingly do anything that defiles or causes someone else to sin against their conscience. Even if that is something like eating meat if that bothers another person's conscience. If eating meat or any questionable activity creates a conflict of conscience, we should not offend or defile other people's conscience and stop doing the activity in question (in front of them).

1 Corinthians 8:12,13 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

Romans 2:15-16 ... their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

Acts 24:16 "This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

Sins driven by fear

There are two types of fear; the first is a godly reverence and respect for God, which keeps us away from sin, gives us wisdom and understanding, and is good. The other kind of fear is evil involving torment and bondage and drives us to do evil out of self-interest and preservation.

Fear is the opposite of faith because fear is believing that the wrong things will happen, taking us captive to the enemy. Fear can cancel or void our faith and can be a trigger that pushes us to sin. Fear is one of the biggest weapons of Satanic powers to manipulate and control us, and if we submit to it, we come under its bondage to sin.

Romans 14:23, "... for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

Hebrews 2:14-15 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He (Jesus) Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Romans 8:14-15 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."*

Proverbs 29:25 *The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.*

Repentance a turning point

Another definition of repentance is a change of attitude, purpose, and direction. The word "turn" is a keyword used repeatedly in the scriptures to describe repentance. It is not enough to say you will stop doing something, repentance requires a change of direction, a different course of action.

Ezekiel 18.21-32, *"But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die... "Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says the Lord GOD, "and not that he should turn from his ways and live" Again, when a wicked man turns away from the wickedness which he committed, and does what is lawful and right, he preserves himself alive. "Because he considers and turns away from all the transgressions which he committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. "Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get*

yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? "For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore, turn and live!"

*Acts 9:32-35, "And all that dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and **turned to the Lord.**"*

*Acts 11:21 "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and **turned unto the Lord.**"*

*Acts 14:15, "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passion with you, and preach unto to you that ye should **turn from these vanities unto the living God.**"*

*Acts 15:19, "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them which from among the gentiles **are turned to God.**"*

*Acts 26:17,18, "... Unto to whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to **turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,** that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."*

Repentance by God

Another aspect of repentance is remorse or regret, which produces a change of attitude or behavior. Concerning sin, God would never need to repent for himself because He exists in eternal perfection and is infinitely holy, righteous, and just.

Numbers 23:19, "God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent."

However, when we repent and turn from sin, God may turn away from the judgment he had previously declared against us and show us his mercy. The contrary is also true if we turn away from God, he could turn from the blessings he once intended to give and deliver us over for the judgment we deserve.

Genesis 6:5-7, "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. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth,

Jeremiah 18:7-10 "The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, "if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. "And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, "if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.

Ezekiel 33:13, 18-19 "When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die. ...

... "When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity (repenting of repentance), he shall die because of it. "But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is lawful and right, he shall live because of it.

God brought Israel out of Egypt with a mighty hand, sending ten miraculous plagues, opening the Red Sea, and destroying Pharaoh's army. Then Moses went up Mt. Sinai for forty days receiving the ten commandments directly from God, and meanwhile, the Israelites were bowing to a golden calf at the base of the mountain. God was outraged and ready to destroy the entire nation.

Exodus 32:9-10 *And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! "Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."*

Moses stood between God and Israel and interceded to stop God from destroying Israel. Moses appealed to God's testimony among the nations and was bold enough to ask God to repent.

Exodus 32:11-12, *Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? "Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them*

from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent (repent) from this harm to Your people.

Again, this is not a reference to the repentance of sin on God's part but to turning away from executing the judgment that the people fully deserved. How did God respond to Moses?

Exodus 32:14, "And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."

We see an example of this principle happen regarding **King Saul** after he had disobeyed God's command to destroy the Amalekites. God promised to bless Saul until Saul turned away from God in disobedience and rebellion.

1 Samuel 15:10,11 "Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying it repented me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me"

1 Samuel 15:35 "... and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel." (See also II Sam. 24:16, Ps. 106:43-46, etc.)

When God sees us turn away from our wickedness, he will turn from bringing his judgment upon us. Consider the example of the people of **Nineveh**. God sent Jonah to that evil city with a message of certain doom, and the people believed Jonah and repented with urgency and sincerity.

Jonah 3:5,8-9 "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" ... "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. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not."

How did God respond to their sincere repentance? When they repented and turned away from evil, God repented and turned away from judgment.

Jonah 3:10 "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

If God spared this evil, godless city when they repented, there is hope for anyone who will turn to God! Let's look at another example, evil **King Ahab**. Notice how the Bible depicts Ahab.

1 Kings 21:25,26 "But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up and he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites."

Besides all of Ahab's Wickedness and idolatry, he killed an innocent man and stole his vineyard (actually, Jezebel did

it, but God held Ahab responsible for it). So, God sent Ahab's hated enemy, Elijah, the prophet of God, with this message:

*1 Kings 21:19 "And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, thus saith the Lord, **In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth (the man that he killed) shall dogs lick thy blood even thine.**"*

You would think there would be no hope for such dirty, low-down-scoundrel like that loathsome Ahab! We would give up on people like Ahab, thinking he's as good as dead because God had pronounced his destiny as dog meat (1 Kings 21:23-24). Some would say, thank God, he deserves it, but that was not the end of the story.

*1 Kings 21:27 "And it came to pass, when **Ahab heard those words that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth and went softly (or and went about mourning, NKJV).**"*

You can probably guess how God responded. God is no respecter of persons no matter how bad or evil they are, and if they repent, God may also repent of sending judgment against them.

*1 Kings 21:28-29 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: "**Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has***

humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day, but I will bring it on his house in the days of his son."

Let's take one more example into consideration, one of the most wicked kings from the tribe of Judah, **King Manasseh**.

2 Kings 21:2,6 "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen" ... "And he made his son pass through the fire (burned his baby alive in worship to a demon), and observed times and used enchantments (used witchcraft), and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards (and consulted spiriting and mediums): he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger."

You would think that if there were anyone that the Lord would want to zap with a lightning bolt, this would be the guy! Yet, God patiently tried to speak to him.

2 Chronicles 33:10 And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen.

The inevitable had to happen, and Manasseh could not escape God's judgment. The Babylonians captured him, and their treatment of him was very severe.

2 Chronicles 33:11 So the LORD brought against them the army commanders of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his

nose, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon.

Well, that takes care of that problem, and God has washed his hands of this despicable, good for nothing, evil man, so good riddance! Right? Wrong!

2 Chronicles 33:12-13 Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.

So, did Manasseh sincerely change his attitude and turn the direction in his life once he got relief and was returned to his kingdom, or was he all talk?

2 Chronicles 33:14-16 He got rid of the foreign gods and removed the image from the temple of the LORD, as well as all the altars he had built on the temple hill and in Jerusalem; and he threw them out of the city. Then he restored the altar of the LORD and sacrificed fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it, and told Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel.

NOW THAT'S CHANGE!!!

Repentance is God's will

As we saw from the previous examples, if we do our part in turning to God, God may turn our situation around and have mercy on us. The will of God is clear that His desire is for all men to come to repentance so that he may save them.

*2 Peter 3:9 "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness **but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**"*

*Ezekiel 33:11 "As I live saith the Lord **God I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways: for why will ye die O house of Israel?"***

Repentance is our choice

God has given us free will to choose for ourselves, and he will not impose upon our will. He sets before us blessings and curses, life and death, and asks us to make a choice.

*Deuteronomy 30:19 This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you **that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.***

*Joshua 24:15 "And if it seems evil to you to serve the **LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods***

*of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. **But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.***

Repentance rejected

Although God desires all men to come to repentance, the truth is that a majority will not. God's patience and longsuffering with people should not be confused with indifference or tolerance because he gives time for repentance.

***Matthew 7:13-14** "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*

2 Peter 3:9** The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, **but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

There will be those who, in the worst adversity, will absolutely refuse to turn to God and harden their hearts even more, like the people who will go through the great tribulation.

***Revelation 16:9-11** "... and his kingdom was full of darkness: and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."*

Revelation 9:18-21 By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone ... But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, ***did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.***

Repentance frauds

Many pretend to repent only to get relief from their situation, but when things get better, they return to their former behavior. Look at the example of **Pharaoh**. After the seventh plague that God brought upon Egypt, Pharaoh repented with his words.

Exodus 9:27-28 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. "This time I have sinned," he said to them. "The LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. Pray to the LORD, for we have had enough thunder and hail. I will let you go; you don't have to stay any longer."

Do you think Pharaoh's repentance was real? Keep reading.

Exodus 9:34-35 When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts. So, Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the

Israelites go, just as the LORD had said through Moses.

Repentance in vain

Others will make a show of repentance but without any results because of irreversible consequences. If you sell something as **Esau** did, it belongs to someone else, and your tears will not make it yours again. Some situations or damages cannot be fixed, repaired, or restored by repentance.

***Hebrews 12:16-17** lest there be any fornicator or profane person like **Esau**, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.*

Judas sold Jesus over to death for 30 pieces of silver, and being sorry could not reverse what he had set in motion. Returning the money (in this case) could not rectify the situation. Nothing could change what Judas had done.

***Matthew 27:3-5** "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 priest and the elders, Saying, I sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. **And they said what is that to us? See thou to that.** And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself." (See also Heb.6:4-6).*

Repentance is not a religious show

Some people make a grand display of repentance and put on a big outward show for people, but they do not impress God. Self-abasement, physical abuses of the body, and emotional outbursts are not signs of true repentance and can be in vain. For example, look at the prophets of Baal after Elijah challenged them to a contest between the God of Israel and Baal.

1 Kings 18:24 "Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God."

How did the prophets of Baal pray and try to get the attention of their god Baal? By self-abasement, cutting themselves, and loud crying in a big entertaining show.

1 Kings 18:28-29 "And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass ... that there was neither voice nor any answer, nor any that regarded."

The followers of Baal put on a religious three-ring circus from morning to night without any results, except for the need for medical attention. By contrast, listen to Elijah's short prayer to turn Israel's heart back to God in repentance.

1 Kings 18:36-38 "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. "Hear me, O LORD,

hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." Then the fire of the LORD fell

The same type of vain religiosity as displayed by the prophets of Baal was what the Apostle Paul had to warn the Colossian church to avoid. Crying, loud wailing, and afflicting yourself do not score any points with God, especially without true repentance from the heart.

Colossians 2:18-23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

Or as written in the N.A.S. version: "These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly Indulgence."

If we are paying attention, there are many ways that God tries to speak to us to bring us to repentance, so let's look at just a few.

Repentance by the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit searches our hearts and minds and convinces us of our sins, warning us of right and wrong, how we should live, and what to do. The Holy Spirit takes our hardened sinful hearts, gives us a tender heart, and writes his law on our hearts and minds, and He leads us on the paths of righteousness and away from sin.

Without the Holy Spirit, it would be impossible to repent (Matt 12:31, Heb 10:29).

John 16:8 *And when he (the Holy Spirit) is come, he will reprove (convict) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

Ezekiel 36:25-26 ... *I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.*

2 Corinthians 3:3 ... *clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.*

Psalms 51:10-11 *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.*

Repentance by the conscience

One of Paul's goals was to have a pure conscience before God and man, with the view that we will stand before God at the judgment to give an account. Our conscience can be a sensitive tool for identifying anything not pleasing to God or offensive to other people.

Without a pure conscience, we cannot have faith, so when our conscience condemns us, we need to repent, turn around, and fix the problem.

Acts 24:16 "This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

1 Timothy 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

1 Timothy 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

Romans 2:15-16 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another;) In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

2 Corinthians 4:2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

2 Corinthians 5:11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made

manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

Hebrews 9:14 ... how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Repentance by confrontation

Sometimes God will send one of his servants on a rescue mission to confront somebody who has sinned but has not repented. King David committed adultery, had the woman's husband killed, and tried to cover it up. God sent Nathan, who told David a story and asked for his judgment.

Nathan asked David (a shepherd) what should happen to a rich man who owned a large flock of sheep, but took his poor neighbor's family pet, a lamb, to feed a visiting friend. David was outraged and pronounced the death penalty against the offender. Then Nathan responded, you are the man! Then Nathan went through the list of David's sins. And David immediately repented.

2 Samuel 12:5-7, 13 So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! ... Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! ... David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.

A similar kind of confrontation happened between Paul and Peter because Peter and others had returned to Jewish legalism, creating divisions and other problems in the church. Paul was not as coy as Nathan, and he confronted Peter directly to his face in front of everybody.

Galatians 2:11-14** Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed ... And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even **Barnabas** was carried away with their hypocrisy. **But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?

Paul, writing to Timothy, urged him to instruct (confront) people who oppose themselves and call them to repent so they can be released from their self-inflicted trap and escape from the Devil.

***2 Timothy 2:25, 26** In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

Repentance by the word of God

The word of God can give stinging rebukes and corrections, or it can also raise preventative boundaries to help us keep our distance from sin. Whether the rebukes come from another person or our personal Bible reading and memorization, God's word cuts like a sword right to the soul to bring conviction and repentance.

***2 Timothy 3:16-17** All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (NIV)*

Hebrews 4:12-13** For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but **all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

***Psalm 119:9, 11, 67** How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. ... Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You! ... Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I keep Your word.*

Repentance through miracles

Miracles produce the fear of God in those who witness them, resulting in either repentance or rejection of God. When Jesus did miracles in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, he was insulted that they did not repent, saying that if he did the same mighty works in Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, they would have repented.

***Matthew 11:20-24** Then He (Jesus) began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, 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. "But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. "But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."*

How do you impress a fisherman? Jesus did a miracle of a great catch of fish, and Peter realized he was in the presence of God and confessed he was a sinner (in repentance).

***Luke 5:6-8** And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So, they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both*

the boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

Repentance through preaching

The people of Nineveh were cruel and wicked, but at the preaching of Jonah, they repented. But Jesus came as the promised Messiah, but his generation of Jews rejected his preaching and hardened their hearts, refusing to repent, bringing a stricter judgment on themselves.

Matthew 12:41-42 "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed, a greater than Jonah is here.

Paul writes to Timothy to preach, convince, rebuke, and give exhortations with sound teaching. Those words do not describe cotton candy and sugar-coated sermons tickling itchy ears to be popular, but implies giving strong messages to produce repentance and godly living.

2 Timothy 4:2-3 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

Repentance through dreams

Abraham lied to King Abimelech by saying his wife Sarah was his sister, fearing that Abimelech would kill him to take Sarah to be his wife. Abimelech did take Sarah, but God came to him in a dream to warn him to return Sarah to Abraham before he sinned. And, so God spoke to Abimelech in a dream and turned him away from sinning with Sarah.

*Genesis 20:2-18 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, she is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. But **God came to Abimelech in a dream by night**, and said to him, **Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife ... And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore, suffered I thee not to touch her. Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.***

Repentance through visions

Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, had a party and decided to use golden cups taken from the temple in Jerusalem, in mockery of the God of Israel, to drink wine and praise his pagan gods.

Then a vision appeared that everyone at the party could see. A hand appeared, making handwriting on the wall and leaving a message that only Daniel could interpret. That message said that Belshazzar had been judged and would lose the kingdom. Belshazzar repented, but it was too late, and he lost his kingdom and his life that night.

*Daniel 5:2-6, 30 Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth **fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall** of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another ... **That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain.***

There is no better example of how a vision can bring repentance and turn a life around than what happened to Saul of Tarsus, who, while on his way to persecute and imprison Christians, had a vision of Christ that knocked him to the ground and turned him around. Saul became Paul and turned his life's mission in the opposite direction, from a persecutor of Christians to being persecuted for Christ.

Acts 26:13-16 (Paul speaking). "at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. "And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' "So, I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 'But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.

Repentance through testimonies

After Paul's conversion, he used the testimony of his heavenly vision to testify to everyone that they should repent and turn to Christ. Let's look at the continuation of Paul's testimony to King Agrippa, speaking of what Jesus told him in the vision.

Acts 26:16-20 (Jesus speaking to Paul). 'But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. 'I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, 'to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive

forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'(Paul speaking)
"Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, "but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.

Paul used his testimony very effectively in bringing people to repentance and leading them to Christ, and even King Agrippa was impacted and close to conversion.

Acts 26:28 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

Of course, all Christians should witness how Jesus turned their life around from darkness to light, and from Satan to God.

Repentance through circumstances

On the Passover, Jesus knew he would be betrayed, beaten, and crucified, so he told his disciples that all of them would fall away from him that night, but Peter spoke up and boldly proclaimed that he would never fall away. Famous last words. Jesus prophesied that Peter would deny him three times before the rooster crows. Peter forgot his vow, and while standing nearby where Jesus was undergoing a sham trial, he was warming himself by a fire, surrounded by Jesus' haters. Those around the fire recognized Peter as one of Jesus' disciples, and Peter denied it.

When the rooster crowed, Jesus turned and looked at Peter. The circumstances hit Peter like a sledgehammer, and the realization of what had just taken place overwhelmed him, and he ran away. The circumstances surrounding Peter brought him to tears and repentance.

Matthew 26:34-35 Jesus said unto him, **Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.** Peter said unto him, *Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise, also said all the disciples.*

Matthew 26:73-75 And after a while came unto him, they that stood by, and said to Peter, **Surely, thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrayed thee.** Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, **I know not the man.** **And immediately the cock crew.** **And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.** **And he went out, and wept bitterly.**

Do you want to talk about circumstances? Jonah was on a boat in the ocean, was thrown overboard, swallowed by a giant fish, and was in the belly of the fish for three days and nights. If that doesn't get your attention, then I don't know what will. After three days in the belly of a fish, he finally repented from his boycott of preaching to Nineveh, and he prayed, and God caused the fish to barf him onto the beach.

Jonah 2:1-2 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly. And he said: "I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, And He answered me. "Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice.

Repentance preached

The most influential preachers in the New Testament began their ministries with a message of repentance. And many of those same preachers ended their ministry by being killed because they would not stop preaching repentance and faith in Christ. Let's look at a few examples.

Preached by John the Baptist

Jesus said that John the Baptist was the greatest prophet up to that time because he was the messenger who would come in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord, Messiah, Israel's King. How did John prepare the way? By preaching repentance.

Matthew 3:1-2 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, ***Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.***

Matthew 3:7-8 But when he (John) saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! ***Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? "Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance.***

When he was asked by ordinary people, the tax collectors, and soldiers what they should do regarding repentance, John gave each group specific answers to how they should repent.

Luke 3:10-14 So the people asked him, saying, "What shall we do then?" He answered and said to them, "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise." Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Collect no more than what is appointed for you." Likewise, the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?" So, he said to them, "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages."

Preached by Jesus

Just the presence of Jesus inspired people to repent, but other times after healing or speaking to them, he would say go and sin no more. Sinning no more would be the very essence of repentance, and Jesus taught more about repentance and hell than anybody, as you can see from the following examples.

Luke 5:32 "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

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

John 5:14 *Afterward Jesus found him (a cripple he healed) in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. **Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.**"*

John 8:10 *When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman (accused of adultery), He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "**Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.**"*

Luke 13:1-5 *And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans (killed by Herod) were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? **"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.**" Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? **"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."***

Preached by Peter

After Peter got filled with the Holy Spirit, he became a fearless and fiery preacher. In Peter's first message, he confronted the Jews who were present while Jesus was crucified and commanded them to repent.

Acts 2:22-23 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

Acts 2:37-38 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 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.

In Peter's second message, he preached to the same crowd of Jews who participated in condemning Christ and asking for Barabbas to be released instead of Jesus (Matthew 27:16-26). Peter goes directly at them for that sin and calls them to repentance for it.

Acts 3:13 "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. "But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, "and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.

Acts 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;

Preached by Paul

The apostle Paul went on a missionary trip, and while in Athens, he took note of the myriad of different gods and idols they worshipped. Then He preached to them and spoke about their ignorance of the only true God, but he didn't accept ignorance or any excuses but commanded them and all men everywhere to repent.

Acts 17:30 "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.

Paul had spent some time in Ephesus, and the believers there were mature and understood the advanced teachings of the gospel. And while Paul was saying his goodbyes, he reminded them that he never held back the truth but continued to preach the basics, namely repentance.

Acts 20:20-21 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Signs of real repentance

When most people think of repentance, they think about crying, depression, and sadness, which (depending on the circumstance) may or may not be part of turning from sin. But like Jesus said, go and sin no more, so repentance is when you stop sinning. Stopping is the key, so if someone continues to sin, they have not repented. Remorse, sorrow, and other similar emotional displays can be vain, destructive, and useless if a person does not repent and continues in sin.

2 Corinthians 7:9-10 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that **your sorrow led to repentance**. For you were made sorry in a **godly manner**, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For **godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.**

Godly Sorrow = Salvation Worldly Sorrow = Death

Paul continued by telling this church that he could recognize how repentance had changed their lives, and he listed seven areas of repentance that confirmed their repentance was sincere.

2 Corinthians 7:11 For observe this very thing, that you **sorrowed in a godly manner**: What **diligence** it produced in you, what **clearing** of yourselves, what **indignation**, what **fear**, what vehement **desire**, what **zeal**, what **vindication!** In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

As we just read, Paul mentioned seven different aspects of repentance, and they are as follows:

1. Diligence

When Paul said what diligence it produced in you, he commended the Corinthian church on using diligence to take care of a situation in the church, namely the repentance and restoration of a brother who fell into sin. Paul followed by saying he used that situation to show his and Titus' diligent care for their church.

2 Corinthians 7:12 **Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care (diligence) for you in the sight of God might appear to you.**

2 Corinthians 8:16-17 **But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord.**

These verses imply that we should be diligent to respond immediately to any sins that may surface with an individual or in the church. The same word is used in the following verses to show fervent diligence in living right and correcting wrongs.

Romans 12:6-8, 11 **Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us ... he who leads, with diligence ... not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;**

2. Clearing of yourselves

This clearing of yourselves is to resolve or remove any sins or wrongs that offended or would cause conflict or guilt so you can clear your reputation and testimony. When a corrupt tax collector, Zacchaeus, invited Jesus for dinner, the people complained that he was a sinner. But Zacchaeus cleared himself by pledging half his money to the poor and restoring four times more than he took. The result was that Jesus said that salvation had come to him.

Luke 19:7-9 But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham;

3. Indignation or Anger

The anger mentioned is against sin, not people, so we restrain ourselves from venting our anger at others that would be sin. Jesus did experience anger at the Pharisee's hardness of heart, but he is God and never sinned. We, on the other hand, cannot handle anger with people so well, and James tells us that our wrath does not produce God's type of righteousness. Anger at sin is good, but anger at people is not.

Mark 3:4-5 Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to

kill?" But they kept silent. And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

*James 1:19-20 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, **slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.***

Ephesians 4:26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath. (Be angry at sin)

Anger against sin and ungodliness is needed to fight and repel it. If we enjoy, tolerate, or approve of sin, we will not fight against it, and it will defeat us. If we love sin, we lose. If we consistently fight against our sins, we will go from being attracted to them to hating them with godly anger as Jesus and David did.

*Psalms 139:20-22 For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take Your name in vain. **Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.***

Proverbs 3:7, 8:13 "Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil." "The fear of the LORD [is] to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

4. Fear

The Corinthians experienced the fear of God, which is reverential respect and awe for the greatness of God and comes from knowing that we will give an account to God at the judgment. The fear of God is a powerful motivation in turning away from the passing pleasures of sins to live with a vision of eternity.

Proverbs 16:6 ... by the fear of the LORD one departs from evil.

2 Corinthians 5:10-11 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

2 Corinthians 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,

5. Desire

The Psalmist compares his desire and thirst for God to a deer running and panting to drink water from a brook.

He had an unquenchable thirst for God while surrounded by multitudes of religious people, but he was unsatisfied with dry, dead religion and needed to feel God's presence. The Psalmist had a great desire for God in his soul, and his separation from God was unbearable.

Psalm 42:1-5 As the deer pants for the water brooks, So, pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, "Where is your God?" When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, With the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast. Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.

The Apostle Paul was similar to the Psalmist in his urgent pursuit of God, and there was no price too high, nothing he would not give up, and no suffering could stop him from pressing forward to gain Christ. Paul repented from being a Pharisee and became an example of a burning desire for Christ.

Philippians 3:7-11 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, ...

... that I may gain Christ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

6. Zeal

Jesus speaking to the church of Laodicea, rebuked them because they had become lukewarm, neither hot nor cold. It sounds like they have no emotion, motivation, or enthusiasm, right? Blah, blah, blah. Jesus gives them a strong rebuke and then commands them to repent.

Revelation 3:15-16, 19 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth ... "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent.

In the original Greek, the word for zealous means: to burn with zeal, to be heated, or to boil with envy, hatred, or anger. So, this church was lukewarm, blah, blah, blah, and Jesus told them to repent and get boiling hot. Never before have Christians needed to repent, get on fire, and get red hot boiling for Jesus more than now! Repent, Jesus is coming soon!

7. Revenge

We fight spiritual warfare with spiritual weapons, specifically in prayer.

Prayer is our weapon to pull down powers and principalities of the Satanic realm and the thoughts and arguments against God that are like fortresses in people's minds. Our revenge comes by getting victory over sin and the devil.

2 Corinthians 10:6 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Jesus gave us an example of prayer where a little widow pestered a judge until he eventually agreed to take vengeance on her enemies. Jesus compared that story to the elect who cry out day and night and how the Son of Man (Christ) will avenge them speedily at the second coming.

Luke 18:5-8 ... 'yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'" Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Our revenge comes by beating the Devil, so the best revenge is when someone repents.

Luke 15:7 "I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

Repentance & Faith

Repentance alone is not sufficient for us to turn to the Lord. Repentance must be mixed with faith to bring about real change and transformation in God.

Hebrews 4:2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

Mark 1:14-15, " Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Acts 20:20-21 ... "how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, "testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

The blessing of repentance

If we turn away from our sins, God may do more than grant us forgiveness but may even pour out his blessings on us.

Joel 2:12-14 "Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." So, rend your heart, and not your garments; **Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm. Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him."**

Acts 3:26 "To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

The rebellious dwell in a dry, barren land, without water, in the blistering heat of the hot sun (Psalms 68:6). But when they turn to the Lord, it's like sweating outside in the scorching heat, coming inside to a nice cool air-conditioned room, and drinking a tall glass of ice-cold water. We can experience times of refreshing in the presence of the Lord.

Acts 3:19 "**Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,**

Call to Action

Because we are in the end times, our world is changing quickly to line up with Bible prophecy. Jesus said the signs of his return would be like birth pangs, growing in intensity and frequency and globally. All those signs happen at once, and we can see them happening in real-time with wars, food shortages, pandemics, shutdowns, and natural disasters, all leading to a one-world government ruled by the antichrist.

Also, there will be a great falling away from Christ, with churches becoming perverted, politically woke, and government-controlled. Eventually, all true believers will have to come out of the dead institutional denominations and fake churches. Thank God we have a blessed hope that Jesus will rapture the church before wrath and judgment hit the earth!

While we have time and freedom, we should study the scriptures, share the gospel, and learn to live by faith. This book is part of a series of basic teachings that all Christians should know and teach. We call it the "toolbox series" because each study is a tool for you to share your faith with others. For free resources and study materials, visit our website at Ears2Hear.online.

