



Sunday School

Compare and Contrast Repentance in the Old Testament and the New Testament

Lesson #101

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The Role of Repentance in the Life That Wins

C.H. Spurgeon once made the statement: "Brethren, we shall not adjust our Bible to the age, but the age to the Bible."

What is repentance? What does it mean?

Webster's dictionary says:

1. deep sorrow, compunction, or contrition for a past sin, wrongdoing, or the like.
2. regret for any past action.

This is the common understanding and use of the word – even in evangelical Christian circles.

This understanding of the word, or better yet this concept of repentance – leads eventually to what many call the "turn or burn" doctrine – unless one turns away from sin, and not just turn, but do in such a regretful and self-deprecating manner – you are going to straight to Hell - "Turn or Burn".

This misunderstanding of True, New Testament repentance actually is what leads many to a "shipwreck of faith" – they just can't come to grips with having to live a permanent life of regret, which is what many people have been led to believe is the Christian Life.

Why do they believe this?

Because this have heard this their whole life! Mostly from the pulpit and other Christians!

Many people's only understanding of the "Christian Life" is a life of self-denial, regret, and a never ending cycle of trying and

failing. And finally, since they can no longer “live” (if you can call it living) like this – many people - sincere people – would rather walk away from all things Christian rather than live this life of hypocrisy.

They are faced with a terrible dilemma - this concept of repentance that they have been taught is biblical, from God - *is just not working.*

They realize that they are really miserable, and must instead put on a “mask” and look happy and fulfilled –when they are neither, for fear of being exposed.

Have you ever felt like that in your Christian life?

That you put on this Happy Face – whether at Church or in other fellowship – and as soon as it’s over – you feel like you could just crawl up in a ball and cry for hours and hours?

If you have – and I know I have – it is probably due in part to a misunderstanding of what it is to live the “Christian Life” – the Life that Wins.

So let’s dig a bit deeper into this concept of repentance – and see what the Bible teaches us about this concept that will turn us away from this struggling life – from the Tears of a Clown – to a life that Jesus promised us – A life where we will “never thirst”

Old Testament Repentance

The usage of repentance in the Old Testament very closely follows the definition above – Could this be where we got it from?

Its typical usage in the Old Testament does describe a lot of the “turn or burn” – typically where God is calling Israel to turn away from Idols and back to God

[Eze 14:6](#) 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.

[Eze 18:30](#) Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn [yourselves] from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

There are many other uses of “repent” in the OT, but this is the general usage and theme

Then what’s my point? So far – it looks like the dictionary usage is right on.

BUT

We must always remember that the NT always remarkably changes things from how they were in the OT.

So – how is repentance used in the NT?

Repentance

There are three Greek words used in the New Testament to denote repentance. (1.) The verb *_metamelomai_* is used of a change of mind, such as to produce regret or even remorse on account of sin, but not necessarily a change of heart. This word is used with reference to the repentance of Judas (Matt. 27:3).

(2.) *Metanoeo*, meaning to change one's mind and purpose, as the result of after knowledge. This verb, with (3) the cognate noun *_metanoia_*, is used of true repentance, a change of mind and purpose and life, to which remission of sin is promised.

[Mat 3:1](#) In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

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

That word Repent used in Mat 3:2 is *Metanoeo* – which is defined as to *think differently or afterwards*, that is, *reconsider*

"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15).

Again – the use of the word *Metanoeo* – which is defined as to *think differently or afterwards*, that is, *reconsider*

There are two aspects here that Jesus is teaching – First of All, Repent – and secondly, believe the gospel.

The simple conclusion is repentance is REQUIRED for belief in the Gospel – That we should first Repent or think differently – AND believe in the Gospel

So what is Repentance in this context?

Repent in this new testament context is different from the concept of repentance that is used in the Old Testament – if it weren't, why would Jesus not just say "believe in what was previously taught.

Isn't the message that Christ brings forth in the New Testament markedly different from what was delivered in the Old Testament??

Why would Jesus come to deliver the same message that had been previously delivered throughout the Old Testament?

The answer is found in the Book of Hebrews – where the Gospel of Christ – this New Covenant, is continuously contrasted to the covenant articles of the Old Testament – and we are told that the

new is better – let's look at Hebrews for a few minutes and explore this point.

[Hbr 1:1](#) GOD, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,

[Hbr 1:2](#) has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

Ahhh – so things have changed when Jesus came – that God had previously spoken to us by the prophets (as codified in the Books of the Old Testament), but now God speaks to us through His Son.

[Hbr 7:22](#) by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.

Huh – a better covenant??

[Hbr 8:1](#) NOW *this is* the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

[Hbr 8:2](#) a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

[Hbr 8:3](#) For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore *it is* necessary that this One also have something to offer.

[Hbr 8:4](#) For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to

the law;

[Hbr 8:5](#) who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, *"See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."*[\[fn1\]](#)

[Hbr 8:6](#) But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

[Hbr 8:7](#) For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.

[Hbr 8:8](#) Because finding fault with them, He says: *"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah--*

[Hbr 8:9](#) *"not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD.*

[Hbr 8:10](#) *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

[Hbr 8:11](#) *"None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know*

Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

[Hbr 8:12](#) *"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds^[fn2] I will remember no more."^[fn3]*

[Hbr 8:13](#) In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

So that leads to the question – What is the Gospel?

While Paul doesn't describe in Galation¹ what the Gospel is, He certainly believes it was taught earlier, and that people had already turned away from that Gospel

[Gal 1:6](#) I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,

[Gal 1:7](#) which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

[Gal 1:8](#) But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

[Gal 1:9](#) As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

We need not search long to find an answer. Paul explains what gospel he preached. In his letter to the Christians at Corinth, Paul tells us what he considered to be of "first importance" in his preaching of the gospel: "Now I make known to you, brethren,

the gospel which I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

The gospel Paul preached was Jesus Christ: That (1) Christ died for our sins (2) He was buried (3) He was raised from the dead on the third day. This was the gospel Paul preached, the gospel that the Corinthians heard and received, and the gospel by which they were saved.

Act 3:19 Repent³³⁴⁰ ye therefore,³⁷⁶⁷ and²⁵³² be converted,¹⁹⁹⁴ that your⁵²¹⁶ sins²⁶⁶ may be blotted out,¹⁸¹³ when³⁷⁰⁴ the times²⁵⁴⁰ of refreshing⁴⁰³ shall come^{2064, 302} from⁵⁷⁵ the presence⁴³⁸³ of the³⁵⁸⁸ Lord;²⁹⁶² It should also be stressed that repentance itself is not a human act, but comes only from God

Rom 2:4 Or²²²⁸ despisest²⁷⁰⁶ thou the³⁵⁸⁸ riches⁴¹⁴⁹ of his⁸⁴⁸ goodness⁵⁵⁴⁴ and²⁵³² forbearance⁴⁶³ and²⁵³² longsuffering;³¹¹⁵ not knowing⁵⁰ that³⁷⁵⁴ the³⁵⁸⁸ goodness⁵⁵⁴³ of God²³¹⁶ leadeth⁷¹ thee⁴⁵⁷¹ to¹⁵¹⁹ repentance?³³⁴¹

-- it is a divine gift of God (Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25).

The message that Paul preached was: "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).

2Co 7:8 For³⁷⁵⁴ though¹⁴⁹⁹ I made you sorry^{3076, 5209} with¹⁷²² a letter,¹⁹⁹² I do not³⁷⁵⁶ repent,³³³⁸ though¹⁴⁹⁹ I did repent:³³³⁸ for¹⁰⁶³ I perceive⁹⁹¹ that³⁷⁵⁴ the³⁵⁸⁸ same¹⁵⁶⁵ epistle¹⁹⁹² hath made you sorry,^{3076, 5209} though¹⁴⁹⁹ *it were* but for⁴³¹⁴ a season.⁵⁶¹⁰

2Co 7:9 Now³⁵⁶⁸ I rejoice,⁵⁴⁶³ not³⁷⁵⁶ that³⁷⁵⁴ ye were made
sorry,³⁰⁷⁶ but²³⁵ that³⁷⁵⁴ ye sorrowed³⁰⁷⁶ to¹⁵¹⁹ repentance:³³⁴¹
for¹⁰⁶³ ye were made sorry³⁰⁷⁶ after a godly manner,^{2596, 2316}
that²⁴⁴³ ye might receive damage²²¹⁰ by¹⁵³⁷ us²²⁵⁷ in¹⁷²²
nothing.³³⁶⁷

2Co 7:10 For¹⁰⁶³ godly^{2596, 2316} sorrow³⁰⁷⁷ worketh²⁷¹⁶
repentance³³⁴¹ to¹⁵¹⁹ salvation⁴⁹⁹¹ not to be repented of:²⁷⁸ but¹¹⁶¹
the³⁵⁸⁸ sorrow³⁰⁷⁷ of the³⁵⁸⁸ world²⁸⁸⁹ worketh²⁷¹⁶ death.²²⁸⁸

Why Did Jesus Come?

"... I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance
– (# 3341)" (Matt. 9:13).

So the main point is this:

[Hbr 8:10](#) *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the
house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will
put My laws in their mind and write them on their
hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My
people.*

We have a New Covenant with God thru Jesus Christ – that we
change our minds (repent) about how we think about God, and
believe the Gospel – the Good News – that we have been saved
by a Risen Savior – Our Lord Jesus Christ!