

Repentance

I. Key Passages

A. Psalm 51

B. 2 Corinthians 7:8-11

II. Definition of Repentance

-WSC Q#87: ‘What is repentance unto life?’ Ans: “*Repentance unto life is a saving grace,¹ whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ,² doth with grief and hatred of his sin,³ turn from it unto God⁴ with full purpose of,⁵ and endeavor after, new obedience.*”

¹Acts 5:31 11:18 2 Tim. 2:25 ²Joel 2:13, 14 Mic. 7:18 Matt 27:3 Luke 15:17; 18:13 ³Ezek. 36:31 2 Cor. 7:11 ⁴Matt. 3:8 Luke 3:8, 10, 12, 14 Acts 26:20 ⁵2 Cor. 7:11

III. The Distinguishing Marks of Repentance

A. Its Unique Focus: Not the expectations of society (reformation) or one's self-image (remorse), but God (1 Samuel 15 Ps. 51:4 Matt. 3:7 Luke 3:7 Acts 17:30, 31; 20:21)

B. Its Unique Root: Not the mere consequences of sin, but hatred of and sorrow for sin (Ezra 9:10-15 Neh. 1:6, 7 Ps. 51:8 Dan. 9:5-19 2 Cor. 7:9-11); accompanied by self-loathing (Job 42:6 Ezek. 20:43 36:31 Rom. 7:24 2 Cor. 7:11)

C. Its Unique Expectation: Not remorse ending in despair, condemnation, and death (Matt. 27:3-5); but the mercy of God in Christ (Ezra 9:8, 9; 10:2 Neh. 1:8, 9 Ps. 51:1 Dan. 9:5-19 Luke 18:13 Rom. 7:24-8:1)

D. Its Unique Resolution: Firm resolution to forsake sin and live a holy life (Ezra 10:3 Ps. 51:13 Luke 15:18 2 Cor. 7:11)

IV. The Fruits of Repentance

A. Open, Thorough Confession (1 Sam. 15:24, 25, 30 2 Sam. 12:13 Ezra 9:6-10 Neh. 1:4-7 Ps. 51 Prov. 28:13 Dan. 9:4-21 Luke 15:21); always to God, and when appropriate to men (James 5:16); ideally free and voluntary (Josh. 7:14, 16-21 2 Sam. 12:1-15)

B. Zealous Restitution: amendment of conduct and restitution (Ezra 10:9-19 Prov. 28:13 Luke 3:3-14; 15:20, 21; 19:8, 9 2 Cor. 7:11 1 Thess. 1:9).

C. Abiding Shame and Regret (Ezra 9:6-10; 10:6 Ps. 51:9 Ezek. 16:63 Dan. 9:7, 8 Luke 18:13 Rom. 6:21 1 Tim. 1:13-15)

V. The Biblical Means of Producing Repentance

A. Human Means

1. Conscience (Acts 24:16 1 Tim. 1:5 Heb. 6:1 with 9:14; 10:22)

2. Rebuke (Ezek. 33:1-9 Matt. 18:15 Luke 17:3 Rom. 15:14 Gal. 6:1 1 Thess. 5:14 2 Thess. 3:15 James 5:19, 20)

3. Church Discipline (1 Cor. 5:1-5 2 Cor. 2:6-8; 7:8-11)

B. Divine Means

1. Divine Chastening (Jer. 31:18, 19 Heb. 12:5-13 Rev. 2:5, 16, 21, 22; 3, 3:19); not always effective (Amos 4:6-10 Rev. 9:18-21; 16:8-11)

2. Divine Blessing (Rom. 2:4)

VI. Motivations and Inducements to Repentance

A. The Promise of Forgiveness (Is. 30:15 Mark 1:4 Luke 3:3; 24:47 Acts 2:38; 5:31; 11:18; 26:18 2 Cor. 7:10)

B. The Experience of God's Mercy and Common Grace (Is. 55:6, 7 Jer. 3:12 Hos. 3:5 Joel 2:13, 14 Rom. 2:4)

C. The Threat of Wrath and Judgment (Amos 4:6-10 Matt. 3:7 Luke 3:7; 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30, 31 Rev. 9:18-21; 16:8-11)

VII. The Role of Repentance in the Application of Salvation

A. Negatively: Repentance is not penance. Penitence is not penance.

B. Positively: Repentance is a disposition of the heart appropriate to the contemplation of God and sin. As such, it is a condition of salvation. It in no way satisfies for sin (Heb. 9:14 1 John 1:7, 9; 2:1, 2).