

ANSWERING THE ANTINOMIANS – PART 3

Jude 3

INTRODUCTION

- The world is gripped with a pursuit of anything “new”
- Old traditions are cast aside for that which is “novel”, in the name of “progress”
- It is the same spirit that was in the idolaters of ancient Athens, who “spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing” (Acts 17:21)
- This quest for novelty infected churches today
- Long held doctrines and practices are rejected for “contemporary” and “modern” ones
- We are confronted with new praise and worship, new standards of holiness, new Bibles, etc
- There are also new doctrines that relate to the gospel and the means of salvation
- In such matters, the old adage applies: *“If it’s new it’s not true, and if it’s true it’s not new”*
- The “faith” (the body of New Testament doctrine) was “once delivered to the saints” in the first century, has been adhered to by God’s churches over 2000 years, and is not to be changed or updated (Jude 3)
- Throughout church history, the churches have consistently held to a Biblical understanding of the doctrine of repentance – a turning from sin to God and a change of mind toward God that results in a change of life
- “Baptism shall be given to all those who have been **taught repentance and the amendment of life** and [who] believe truly that their sins are taken away through Christ, and to all those who desire to walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and be buried with Him in death, so that they might rise with Him” (Schleitheim Confession, 1527)
- “We believe that in the ordinance of baptism, the water is the visible and external sign, which represents to us that which, by virtue of God’s invisible operation, is within us - namely, the renovation of our minds, and the mortification of our members through [the faith of] Jesus Christ. And by this ordinance we are received into the holy congregation of God’s people, previously professing and **declaring our faith and change of life.**” (Waldensian Confession of Faith of 1544)
- “Unfeigned repentance is an inward and true sorrow of heart for sin, with sincere confession of the same to God, especially that we have offended so gracious a God and so loving a Father, **together with a settled purpose of heart and a careful endeavour to leave all our sins**, and to live a more holy and sanctified life according to all God’s commands” (The Orthodox Creed, 1679)
- “This saving repentance is an evangelical grace, whereby a person, being by the Holy Spirit made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin, doth, by faith in Christ, humble himself

for it with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrency; praying for pardon and strength of grace, **with a purpose and endeavour by supplies of the Spirit to walk before God unto all well-pleasing in all things**" (Philadelphia Confession of Faith, Baptist, 1742).

- Over the last few weeks we have been addressing some false views of repentance and answering them from the Bible
 - Today we will consider more antinomian errors and refute them from Scripture
- I. **"Since it is impossible to repent of every sin, then it is not necessary to turn from any sin, except the sin of unbelief"**
- A. We have already established that repentance in the Bible is a turning from sin (1 Thessalonians 1:9; Jonah 3:8; Matthew 12:41)
- B. Is repentance turning from *all* sin?
1. We are to repent of the sin that is inherent to our nature, that we receive from Adam (Job 42:6)
 2. We are to repent of actual "sin" in a general sense
 3. But this includes those *specific* sins that plague us daily
 4. It would be impossible to repent of "sin" abstractly while clinging to actual sins
- C. To those who claim a sinner needn't turn from all sin to be saved, we might ask, "What sins do you get to keep and cherish in your heart and still be saved?"
1. There is often one, or a few particular sins, that are an obstacle to repentance
 2. The Rich Young Ruler may have been happy to repent of every other sin in his life, except his love of money, but the Lord Jesus would not accept such partial repentance (Matthew 19:16-22)
- D. The change of mind that takes place in repentance creates a hatred of *all* sin and a desire to turn from *all* sin
1. It is a completely different view of sin – the sin that was once loved and cherished, is now hated and abhorred, most of all because it is offensive to the God we now humbly look to for mercy
 2. We become "dead to sin" (Romans 6:2)
 3. The call to repentance is not a call to "stop sinning" – this would be a works-salvation
 4. Repentance acknowledges that we are sinners, that we can't stop sinning, but that *we want to* by God's grace
 5. Such a change is impossible in ourselves, but with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26), and only by his grace can sinners repent (Acts 11:18)

"In the next place, repentance to be sure *must be entire*. How many will say, "Sir, I will renounce this sin and the other; but there are certain darling lusts which I must keep and hold." O sirs, In God's name let me tell you, it is not the giving up of one sin, nor fifty sins, which is true repentance; it is the solemn renunciation of every sin. If thou dost harbour one of those accursed vipers in thy heart, thy repentance is but a sham. If thou dost indulge in but one lust, and dost give up every other, that one lust, like one leak in a ship, will sink thy soul. Think it not sufficient to give up thy outward vices; fancy it not enough to cut off the more corrupt sins of thy life; it is all or none which God demands. "Repent," says he; and when he bids you repent, he means repent for all thy sins, otherwise he never can accept thy repentance as being real and genuine. The true penitent hates sin in the race, not in the individual—in the mass, not in the particular. He says, "Gild thee as thou wilt, O sin, I abhor thee! Ay, cover thyself with pleasure, make thyself gaudy, like the snake with its azure scales—I hate thee still, for I know thy venom, and I flee from thee, even when thou comest to me in the most specious garb." All sin must be given up, or else you shall never have Christ: all transgression must be renounced, or else the gates of heaven must be barred against you. Let us remember, then, that for repentance to be sincere it must be entire repentance." (Charles Spurgeon, 1856)

II. "As long as a person believed at some point in their life, they have eternal life, even if they later renounce their faith"

- A. In recent times, high profile evangelicals have renounced their profession, and no longer believe
 1. Some would say they were once saved, but have lost their salvation, but this is impossible (John 10:28)
 2. Some would say that they were once saved, and remain saved
 3. "if a man has believed in Christ, he is regenerate and in possession of eternal life, even if he ceases to believe in God in the future." (Joseph C. Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings*)
 4. Some would say they were never saved in the first place
- B. The nature of saving faith
 1. Not all "belief" in Christ is genuine
 - a. The devils believe there is one God (James 2:19)
 - b. There is a "dead" faith that has no works accompanying it (James 2:20)
 - c. Many Jews "believed in his [Christ's] name", after seeing his miracles, yet did not receive him as their Saviour and were not saved (John 2:23-25)
 - d. Many, like the stony ground hearer, receive the word with joy, but there is no root to their faith, and they fall away (Luke 8:13)
 2. Believing in Christ is not a mere mental assent to a set of propositions, but a whole-hearted trusting of the soul into his hands, depending on his atonement for sin, and receiving him as Lord and Saviour

C. True faith perseveres

1. God always completes the work he begins (Philippians 1:6)
2. The good work of grace that begins at justification, continues in sanctification, and is completed in glorification.
3. That is not to say that our faith can be weak at times, and we may stumble
4. But it is God's power, not our own that keeps us from ultimately falling (1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24), and it is God's hand that upholds us (Psalm 37:23-24; Proverbs 24:16)

D. The apostate was never saved

1. Not all who call Christ Lord and do works in his name are saved (Matthew 7:21-23)
2. The apostate has an outward form of godliness, but has not the power of it (2 Timothy 3:5)
3. They may continue their profession for a time, but eventually reveal their true nature (2 Peter 2:22)
4. Their abandonment of their profession is proof of their true spiritual state (1 John 2:19)
5. Many who are regarded as "backsliders" are in fact lost and in need of genuine conversion
6. The final doom of the apostate is most severe (Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:29; 2 Peter 2:20-21)

CONCLUSION

1. While we have been focussing primarily on repentance today, it must be made clear that repentance alone is not sufficient to save a sinner
2. We are called to turn from our sins to God, yet the problem of guilt of our sin must be dealt with
3. Christ has provided by the sacrifice of himself, the full payment for our sins, and we are cleansed and pardoned by faith in his blood
4. Have you both turned from your sin, and trusted in him for salvation?
5. While contemporary Christianity, in its imitation of the world, runs after every "new" trend in the name of "relevance", we must reject this philosophy and remain committed to the faith that was once delivered in the New Testament, and held by the saints throughout this age of grace
6. Such a position will be scorned by both the world and modern-day "Christendom", but our first duty is to please and honour Jesus Christ, not men