

# The Soul Winner's Manual

LECTURE 10 (part 1 of 2) OUTLINE BY RALPH "YANKEE" ARNOLD

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## REPENTANCE AND THE GOSPEL

Does the Bible teach that an unbeliever must repent in order to be saved? Yes, it does. Every time I present the gospel, I teach repentance. The apostle Paul said the Gospel of Christ was the power of God unto salvation to both the Jew and the Greek (**Romans 1:16**). He said that his ministry was to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God (**Acts 20:24**).

What was the **Gospel of Grace** that he testified to both the Jew and the Greek? "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks **REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD**, and **faith** toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (**Acts 20:21**).

There is a great deal of confusion regarding the meaning of the word "repent". The "dictionary meaning" used today is much different from the meaning of the four Greek words that are translated as "repent" or "repentance".

### MAN'S MEANING

Webster's Scholastic Dictionary gives this meaning for "repent"- (v.i.) to **feel** regret for something done or left undone: to be penitent, (v.t.) to remember with self-reproach or **sorrow**. It also gives this definition for "repentance"-act of repenting, sorrow for sin, penitance, contrition.

**So** some preachers say that men must "turn from sin", "be willing to turn from sin", or "feel sorrow for sin" or they cannot be saved! If a man must do any of these things to be saved, then he merits his salvation by his good works. **This message adds human effort or work to faith for salvation.**

### BIBLICAL MEANING

Most preachers and Bible teachers they have heard speak about repentance have never done #1 or #2 for themselves either. Most Christians are **easily confused over its Biblical meaning** because they have never:

- 1) Taken a concordance and carefully studied the passages where the term is used,
- 2) They have never read any books that deal exclusively with the Bible uses of the word "repent", and **if you get the meaning of the word repent wrong as it relates to salvation, your conclusions will be wrong.**

Have you ever done a personal, in-depth Bible study about repentance on your own? Have you ever read a book dealing with repentance and its various meanings and uses in the Bible? The answer to both of those questions is probably "No". That is one of the reasons why there is so much confusion and wrong teaching about repentance - especially **as it relates to salvation**. **"God is not the author of confusion"**, and Satan takes great delight in promoting such confusion about repentance!

"Believe on Jesus Christ and turn from your sin and you will be saved" is a false message. It is a lie; it cannot save. Many believe that repent means turn from sin and they say a man must repent by turning from his sins in order to be saved. When such a message is preached, *how will it come across to the lost person?* "I know that smoking and drinking are sins, and I've tried to quit them many times, but I just can't. I can never be saved because I can't quit my sinning."

## Doesn't the Bible teach that repentance is necessary for salvation? Yes, it does.

The question then becomes: what **does the word "repentance" mean as it relates to the salvation of the lost?** There are four Greek words from which the word "repent" is translated (all of these definitions come from *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* by G. Abbot-Smith):

- 1)Metanoia and Metanoeo. These two words mean the same thing (metanoia is the noun of metanoeo).
- 2)The definition of these two words is **"TO CHANGE ONE'S MIND."** The other Greek words are: Metamellomai. It means "to regret". Ametameletos. It is translated "unregretted".

The Word "repent" is used in connection with **unbelievers for salvation** and **believers for service**. Remember the word "save" and "justified" are used for both also. An unbeliever is **"saved"** from hell by faith in Christ; a believer **"saves"** his life on earth by living for Christ and the gospel.

An **unbeliever** is "justified" before God and receives Christ's righteousness by FAITH alone, a **believer** is justified before men and God by works for rewards. So we need to be concerned with the Greek words for repent that are always used *in connection with a man's salvation* from Hell to Heaven.

Only **two** of these **four** Greek words are used in connection with salvation. Those Greek words are "metanoia" and "metanoeo" which mean, "to change one's mind". So when the Bible says a man must *repent* to be saved, it is saying he must **change his mind** to be saved!

It is not another condition for salvation added to belief. Rather, it is automatically *included* in belief! How can you believe in Christ as your Savior unless you change your mind? The Gospel of John consistently states that a lost man must **believe**. Yet this same book (which is "God's Gospel Tract"), **NEVER ONCE USES** either the word "repent" or "repentance"! Why? When you believe, you automatically repent! The person who has believed in Christ as his Savior (**John 3:16**) has changed his mind from whatever he believed would save him before.

It is evident; not only from the Greek meaning, but also from the **context** of several passages that repent (metanoeo) means "to change one's mind". **Luke 13:1-5** shows very clearly repentance is a thought process. "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, **SUPPOSE YE** that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?"

I tell you, Nay: but except ye **REPENT**, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, **THINK YE** that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye **REPENT, YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH.**"

They **thought** certain people had perished physically because *these people were greater sinners* than others. Christ told them to change their mind or *they* would perish in the like manner! Their error was in thinking they were better than others. They had *self-righteousness*. They needed to realize *they were sinners also* and needed God's righteousness. They- who **THOUGHT** they were so much better- would perish also unless they changed their minds!

Does the Bible teach that an unbeliever must repent in order to be saved? **Yes, it does**. Every time I present the gospel, I teach repentance. Only two of the four Greek words are used in connection with salvation. Those Greek words are "metanoia" and "metanoeo" which mean, "to change one's mind". So, when the Bible says a man must *repent* to be saved, it is saying he must **change his mind** to be saved!

Luke also contains another passage (**Luke 16:29-31**), which shows that repentance is a **thought process**. This is the account of the rich man and the beggar, Lazarus, who both died and went to Hades (the place of the departed dead). The rich man went to the part for unbelievers and the beggar to the paradise section for believers (a waiting place until Christ would die and pay for sin).

The rich man, in torment, could see Abraham and Lazarus afar off. He pleaded with Abraham to send Lazarus back to earth to **testify** to his five brothers. **Rom. 4:1-5** shows that Abraham was justified by faith without works

"Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them **hear** them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will **repent**. And he said unto him, if they hear not **Moses and the prophets**, (look at **Luke 24:25-27**) neither will they be **PERSUADED**, though one rise from the dead." Notice Abraham does not say, "neither will they turn from their sin", but neither will they be persuaded. **When you repent, you have been persuaded in your mind**; you have changed your mind. The rich man's brothers did not need to turn from their sin to avoid going there; they needed to put their faith in Christ! Like Abraham did.

**Acts 2:38** says, "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." "Repent," says Peter- "Change your mind." Peter was preaching to the Jewish people. "Ye men of ISRAEL, hear these words" (**Acts 2:22**). They did not believe that the man Jesus was their Messiah or Christ-the God who would save them.

So, Peter let them know, "Therefore let all of the house of Israel **know assuredly**, that God hath made this same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. 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. . ." (**Acts 2:36-38**).

The Jews were pricked in their heart- your heart is the part of you that THINKS, feels, and wills (Ardnt and Gingrich Lexicon)-it is your mind. They needed to change their mind and believe that Jesus is the Lord. He is God! He is the promised Messiah who would save them from their sins. Peter *never* mentions in his sermon a need to quit sinning or feel sorrow for sin to be saved. His sermon centers on the resurrection-proof that Jesus is "both Lord and Christ". So it is evident from the context here also that repentance involves a change of mind.

The basic meaning of the word "salvation" is "deliverance". It can refer to deliverance from hell, deliverance from ruin or loss, deliverance from physical harm, or deliverance from the Philistines! Whatever a man is delivered or saved *from* is **not included in the definition of salvation**. it is the same with the word repentance (metanoia) which means "change of mind". It does not always refer to a person trusting Christ as Savior. It can also refer to a change of mind about anything! Whatever a man changes his mind from or to is not included in the definition of repentance.

### **Good illustration of repentance is found in Matt. 21:28-31.**

Matt 21:28 But what **think ye**? A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.

21:29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he **repented**, and went.

21:30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I *go*, sir: and went not.

21:31 Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. Mat 1:32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and **ye believed him not**: but the publicans and the harlots **believed him**: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, **repented not afterward, that ye might believe him**.

**Thus, believers *can* and *need* to repent also, but not about the same thing the lost need to repent for!** A believer in the city of Samaria was told to repent. We know he was a believer because **Acts 8:13** says, "Then Simon himself believed also." When Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given to people (at that point in time) through laying on of the apostles' hands, he tried to buy this power from them. Peter told him, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy **HEART** is not right in the sight of God. **Repent** therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the **THOUGHT** of thy heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." (**Acts 8:21-23**). Why did Simon want this power? Pride! Before he was saved he had used the power of sorcery, "giving out that himself was *some great one*" (**Acts 8:9**). Remember, every *believer* possesses an old nature, which is just as sinful after he is saved as before.

Simon's *thought* was a prideful one. He put himself first. He wanted the preeminence. He needed to change his mind (repent) about this wickedness. All believers need to repent; we need to change our mind concerning sin in our lives. We need to see it as God does, *admit* we are wrong (confess it), forsake it-and then God promises we will prosper (Proverbs 28:13). Pride (which is self-centeredness) can creep in very subtly. It takes many forms: self-pity ("poor me"), fear (what will other people think of *me*?), anger ("someone has violated *my* rights or hurt *me*). Do not cover your sin (well, I really wasn't wrong *because*) but repent, change your mind (I *was* wrong). Confess it and forsake it!

A believer may repent about sin, but repentance is not the same thing as sorrow for sin. "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye *sorrowed unto repentance*: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing" (**II Corinthians 7:9**). Sorrow can lead a man to change his mind. **II Corinthians 7:10** says, "godly sorrow works repentance;" it does not say that godly sorrow is the same thing as repentance.

**Hebrews 6:1** "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of *repentance* from dead works, and of *faith* toward God". **Jonah 3:9** Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? **Jonah 3:10** And God saw their **works**, that they **turned from their evil way**; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did *it* not. (Did God turn from sins?)

What is it that unbelievers need to change their mind about? To tell a lost man that he must turn from sin in order to be saved is to tell him to do something that is *impossible* for him to do! His sin is *within* him. All he has is an old sinful nature, with no power to overcome it! "For when we were *without strength*, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). We were without strength to turn from sin or live a perfect life. **True biblical repentance for salvation, is a man rejecting salvation by works and trusting Christ by faith.**

God's *desire* is for all men to change their minds and trust Him alone for their salvation so they will not perish (**II Peter 3:9**). For the sake of the lost man, present repentance clearly as a CHANGE OF MIND. To be saved, you no longer put your trust in your works, but in Christ alone to get you to heaven. God is grieved to hear a preacher say in the same sermon, "Salvation is by grace through faith alone, but you must 'turn from sin' to be saved." Don't make that mistake!