

Repent or Perish

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“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” (Luke 13:3)

These were the words of the incarnate Son of God. They have *never* been cancelled; nor will they be as long as this world lasts. Repentance is *absolutely necessary* if the sinner is to “make peace with God” (Isa. 27:5), for repentance is the throwing down the weapons of rebellion against Him. Repentance does not save, yet no sinner ever was or ever will be saved without it. None but Christ saves, but an *impenitent heart cannot* receive Him.

A sinner *cannot* truly believe until he repents. This is clear from the words of Christ concerning His forerunner, “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:” (Matt. 21:32). It is also evident from His clarion call in Mark 1:15, “repent ye, and believe the gospel.” This is why the apostle Paul testified “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). Make no mistake on this point dear reader, God “now commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). In requiring repentance from us, God is pressing His righteous claims upon us. He is infinitely worthy of supreme love and honor, and of universal obedience. This we have wickedly denied Him. Both an acknowledgement and amendment of this is required from us. Our disaffection for Him and our rebellion against Him are to be owned and made an end of. Thus repentance is a *heartfelt realization* of how dreadfully I have failed, all through my life, to give God His rightful place in my heart and daily walk.

The righteousness of God's demand for my repentance is evident if we consider the heinous nature of sin. Sin is a *renouncing* of Him who made me. It is *refusing* Him His right to govern me. It is the determination to please myself; thus, it is rebellion against the Almighty. Sin is spiritual lawlessness, and utter disregard for God's authority. It is saying in my heart, I care not what God requires, I am going to have *my own way*; I care not what be God's claim upon me, I am going to be lord over myself. Reader, do you realize that *this* is how you have lived?

Now true repentance issues from a realization in the heart, wrought therein by the Holy Spirit, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, of the awfulness of ignoring the claims of Him who made me, of defying His authority. It is therefore a holy hatred and horror of sin, a deep sorrow for it, and acknowledgement of it before God, and a *complete heartforsaking of it*. Not until this is done will God pardon us. “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: But whoso *confesseth* and *Forsaketh* them shall have mercy” (Prov. 28:13). In true repentance the heart turns to God and acknowledges: my heart has been set upon a vain world, which could not meet the needs of my soul; I forsook Thee, the fountain of living waters, and turned unto broken cisterns which held non: I now own and bewail my folly. But more, it says: I have been a disloyal and rebellious creature, but I will be so no longer. I now desire and determine with all my might to serve and obey Thee as my only Lord. I betake myself to Thee as my present and everlasting Portion.

Reader, be you a professing Christian or no, it is *repent* or *perish*. For every one of us, church members or otherwise, it is either *turn* or *burn* — turn from your course of self-will and self-pleasing; turn in *brokenness of heart* to God, seeking His mercy in Christ; turn with full purpose of heart to please and serve HIM: or be tormented day and night, forever and ever, in the Lake of Fire. Which shall it be? Oh, get down on your knees right now and beg God to give you the spirit of true repentance.

“*Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins*” (Acts 5:31).

“*For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death*” (2 Cor. 7:10).