

leaving his father; repentance involved returning to his father. We also see genuine humility in verse 21. *“I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.”*

Part of God’s plan of salvation involves repentance (Acts 2:38). Erring Christians need to repent (Acts 8:22). God gives men a choice: repent or perish (2 Peter 3:9; Luke 13:3). Repentance involves getting out of sinful practices. This is seen in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 where Paul lists several sins the Corinthians were guilty of before they obeyed the gospel. Those sins included fornication, adultery, homosexuality, theft and more. Paul said *“And such were some of you. But you are washed, but you are sanctified...”* (1 Corinthians 6:11). They were washed of all sins that they repented of and only those sins. Baptism does not change an unscriptural marriage into a scriptural one any more than baptism changes a practicing homosexual who continues that sin after his baptism into a right relationship with God. Repentance in both cases involves turning from sin and turning to God. Repentance is hard because it involves change and change is painful.

When men sin they need to repent while they have conscience to do so lest they be hardened. *“but exhort one another daily, while it is called Today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin”* (Hebrews 3:13). Repentance involves change on our part. The choice however is clear, repent or perish!

We invite you to study the most important book ever written – the Bible.

Go to <http://www.ibtministries.org> to enroll in this *free* Bible correspondence course program.

God’s Plan of Salvation

- **Hear** the Gospel of Christ - Romans 10:14; Romans 10:17
- **Believe** that Jesus Christ is the Son of God - Mark 16:16; John 8:24
- **Repent** of our sins - Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38
- **Confess** Christ before men - Matthew 10:32, 33; Romans 10:10
- **Be Immersed** (Baptized) into Christ - Galatians 3:27; I Peter 3:21; Acts 22:16
- **Live Faithfully** for Christ - Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:10; 2 Peter 3:18

**If you are not following God’s plan,
please obey it today**

Repentance



**PO Box 49494
Cookeville, TN 38506**

info@ibtministries.org

When sin caused the gates of paradise to be closed to man, the door of repentance was opened to him. During the Old Testament days God called men to repentance through the message of the prophets (Ezekiel 18:30; Jeremiah 18:1-8). John the baptizer was sent to preach the message of repentance to prepare the way for Christ (Matthew 3:1-2; Mark 1:4). Today God speaks through His Son (Hebrews 1:1) and Christ wants the message of repentance and remission of sins proclaimed to the whole world (Luke 24: 46-47).

In the Old Testament there are different Hebrew words used for our English word “repentance.” The word *nacham* is sometimes used about God and sometimes about men. This word does not necessarily imply sin, though sin may be involved when it applies to men. The word simply means to lament, to grieve. It involves sympathy, disappointment or hurt. Such is the case in Genesis 6:6: “**And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.**” Also it is used in Jonah 3:10: “**Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring unto them and He did not do it.**” God did nothing wrong but changed his course of action because the people repented.

Then there is the Hebrew word *shawb*. This word indicates turning back or changing directions. This word is frequently used in the prophets. This word demands a change in attitude toward sin and toward God. In 1 Kings 8:47 the KJV uses the word “*bethink*.” This, however, is the Hebrew word *shuwb*. Also it is used in Ezekiel 14:6 “**Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: Repent, turn yourselves from your idols, and turn your faces away from all your abominations.**” That verse literally says “*turn and*

be turned from your idols.” This is clearly a turning away from idols and turning to God. A similar passage is seen in Ezekiel 18:30. The people are told to “**Repent, and turn from all your transgressions.**” It was not good enough then or now just to stop doing wrong. Man was required to turn away from sin and then turn to God in order to repent.

In the New Testament the Greek word *metamellomai* is used to indicate emotional concern or regret. This is the word used of Judas in Matthew 27:3. Judas had emotional concern and regret but he did not truly repent. The Greek *metanoeo* expresses spiritual change and return to God. This is the word used in Matthew 3:2: “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**” This is also the word Peter used in Acts 2:38: “**Repent, and let every one of you be baptized.**”

The importance of repentance is seen in the following passages. “**I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish**” (Luke 13:3). Heaven is interested in man’s repentance “**I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance**” (Luke 15:7). Repentance is commanded from God. “**Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent**” (Acts 17:30). “**The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance**” (2 Peter 3:9).

There seems to be much misunderstanding concerning repentance in the world today. Viewed negatively repentance is not just fear. In

Acts 24:25 Felix trembled but there is no indication he repented. Repentance is not just sorrow for sin, 2 Corinthians 7:10 says that godly sorrow leads to repentance. Judas seemed to be sorry for what he had done but did not repent.

Viewed positively repentance is a change of one’s will produced by godly sorrow and resulting in a reformation of life. There are at least two classic examples of repentance seen in the Word of God. First, consider the people of Nineveh. “**The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here**” (Matt. 12:41). Jonah’s message was a message of judgment on Nineveh. “**And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day’s walk. Then he cried out and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown**” (Jonah 3:4). The people proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth. Their repentance could be seen by God and man. “**Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way**” (Jonah 3:10). They turned from their evil and turned to God; this is true repentance.

A second example is seen in the prodigal son of Luke 15:11-32. After leaving his father and wasting his substance with riotous living, verse 17 says “**he came to himself.**” What was involved in his repentance? First, there was the recognition of where he was. He saw himself in the pig pen. Then, there was genuine sorrow for his sins. He said he would arise and go back to his father. Included in this was his acknowledgment of his sin. In verse 18 he would say “**Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you.**” His sin involved