



Repentance the unloved message

The Concept of Repentance

- The term repentance has a negative connotation for many of us.
- We associate the term repentance with penitent and penance. Which, in turn, we equate with atonement or punishment.
- This misunderstood concept prevents many people from entering the freedom that Jesus promised us.
- The biblical concept of penance is fundamentally different from the widespread penitential concept that has been taught to us.
- When we understand what we are told in the Letter of James, our lives change for good in every conceivable relationship.

James 1:22.

But be the perpetrators of the Word and not just listeners who deceive themselves.

Definition of penance according to Strongs

- *Greek*
Strongs No. 341 metanoia metanoia, remorse for guilt, including sensory change; Consequently, repentance of a different, previously expressed opinion and/or decision.
- *Hebrew*
Strongs No. 7725 shav Reversal; Return
Strongs No. 7729 shubah retreat from, reversal of

The Hellenistic System of Thought

To understand the divine concept of repentance, we must briefly deal with the paradigm we are familiar with, which is characterized by Hellenistic-humanistic ideas.

- *The Hellenistic-humanist philosophy of thought is juxtaposed with the Hebrew-biblical one.*
- *The two paradigms are not compatible and are diametrically opposed.*
- *In the Hellenistic-humanist paradigm, the human being independent of God and his thinking, speaking, and doing is the central theme.*
- *On the other hand, the Hebrew-biblical understanding sees man as dependent on God and his intervention, love, grace, and salvation.*
- *Thus, under no circumstances are we able to meet God's requirements from within ourselves.*
- *That is why the biblical understanding is centered on God's help and grace.*

Hellenistic philosophy includes latently anchored doubts about God

Protagoras wrote¹ In Scripture called *Peri theôn (about the gods)*

¹ *Ancient Greek Philosophy 490-411 BC*

- *As for the gods, it is impossible for me to know whether they exist or not, nor about their forms e.i. The forces that prevent me from knowing it are numerous and the question is confused and human life short.*
- *Here he shows himself to be agnostic. Neither can one say whether there are gods, nor what they could be like. Thus, soon after his death, he was known as a doubter of the existence of the gods.*

Logically, the following results from this thinking, i.e., if it is not certain whether gods exist over the top, how should our thoughts and actions be measured, if not by them:

*"Man is the measure of all things,
the being that they are, the idle one,
that they are not".*

Satan succeeded very early in building paradigms that philosophically justify doubts about God or gods.

- *If we still think we're a little good and everything revolves around us in the end.*
- *Is it not surprising that our problems and difficulties lie in the fact that our churches and thus also the Christian doctrine and faith are predominantly shaped by Hellenistic-humanist thinking and we cannot recognize it because the biblical truths are closed to us.*
- *Consequently, we consider an act accepted by our intellect, already synonymous with an act of repentance.*
- *Emotional waves, tears, remorse for an act are often interpreted as penance.*
- *The Bible, however, speaks, repents changes your mind, and repents of your evil ways...*

James 1:22.

But be the perpetrators of the Word and not just listeners who deceive themselves.

The biblical word content – repentance

The Greek and Hebrew languages have their own differently aligned weightings:

- *Greek – puts emphasis on recognition*
- *Hebrew – puts emphasis on doing*
Repentance or return to the abandoned path, combined with withdrawal from wrong paths – is an act

We must state one thing:

- Change of mind, sensory change is never based on emotions and must not be.
- It is a decision; it is a pure act of will that follows a conviction.
- The change of heart must be followed by the external act of repentance.
- Repentance is a change of heart to put into practice, i.e., to do what I have set out to do.
- Without repentance back to the way of God, sensory transformation is purely theoretical, but has no practical effect on our lives.

The Prototype for Repentance - The Prodigal Son

Luke 15:11–14

11 But he said, "A man had two sons; 12 And the younger of them said unto the Father: Father, give me that part of the property which falls to me. And he shared with them the possessions. 13 And after not many days, the younger son brought all things together, and traveled away to a distant land, and there he wasted his fortune, living lavishly. 14 But when he had consumed all things, a tremendous famine came upon that land, and he himself began to suffer shortages. 15 And he went forth and hung himself upon one of the citizens of that land, who sent him unto his fields to herd pigs. 16 And he desired to fill his belly with the pods which the pigs ate; and no one gave him. 17 But when he

went into himself, he said, how many of my Father's Day laborers have an abundance of bread, but I am dying of hunger here. 18 **I will go and** go unto my Father, and will say unto him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son, make me like one of your day laborers. 20 **And he set out and went unto his father.** But when he was still far away, his father saw him and was moved inside and ran and fell around his neck and kissed him tenderly. 21 But the Son said unto him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, I am no longer worthy to be called thy Son. 22 But the father said unto his slaves, "Bring in the best dress and put it on him and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.

- **Sensory Transformation - Decision**

I want to go out and go to my Father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.

- **Repentance Back to the father - Deed**

And he set out and went to his father. But when he was still far away, his father saw him and was moved inside and ran and fell around his neck and kissed him tenderly.

The Importance of Repentance in the New Testament

In contrast to today's heresy of the grace movement and its view that repentance is no longer valid, the Bible speaks quite explicitly of the necessity of repentance through penance. In the following, I show some statements of the Gospels, Acts, epistles, and Revelation.

John the Baptist

Matthew 3:1-3

*1 But in those days John the Baptist comes and preaches in the wilderness of Judea 2, saying, **Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.** 3 For this is the one spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, who says: "Voice of a caller in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths!"*

Jesus on his first sermon

We often have a totally wrong image of the liberating gospel because we have been wrongly told that we only must believe. But Jesus began His ministry with the following words:

Matthew 4:17.

*From then on, Jesus began to preach and say: **Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near!***

Repentance before faith

Mark 1:14.

*14 And after John was recorded, Jesus came to Galilee and preached the gospel of God 15, saying, "The time is filled, and the kingdom of God is near. **Repent and believe** in the gospel.*

Jesus gives us the instruction of what to do... repents and believes in the gospel.

- Here we see the sequence.
 - *Repentance - Repentance*
 - *Then Faith*

There is no substitute for repentance. No one is excluded, even religious rituals and activities are no substitute for repentance. As we see in this example mentioned by Jesus.

Religious duties and activities are no substitute for repentance

Luke 13:1–5

*At that time, however, some were present who told him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mixed with their battle victims. 2 And he answered and said unto them, do ye think that these Galileans were sinners before all Galileans, because they have suffered this? 3 No, I tell you, but if ye do not **repent**, you will all perish as well. 4 Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloah fell and killed them: Do you think that they were debtors before all the people who dwell in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you, but if you do not **repent**, you will all perish as well.*

Jesus' Last Words and Commission of His Disciples

Luke 24:46–47

*46 And said unto them, thus it is written, and thus the Christ had to suffer, and on the third day rose from the dead 47, and in his name **repentance and forgiveness** of sins be preached unto all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*

Repentance leads to forgiveness, so without repentance no forgiveness

The Pentecost Message

At Pentecost, Peter took up the theme of repentance when he was asked by the people what to do:

Acts 2:37–38

*7 But when they heard [this], it penetrated through their hearts, and they said to Peter and the other apostles, "What shall we do, brethren? 38 But Peter said unto them, **Repent**, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the **remission of your sins**, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Paul

Paul made sure that it was understood that he had not concealed anything, which is useful, therefore, relevant to salvation:

Acts 20:20

*20 as I have withheld nothing of what is useful, that I would not have proclaimed it unto you and taught you, publicly and in the houses, 21 I testified to both Jews and Greeks **of repentance** of God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Basic Teachings in the New Testament

The basic teachings for a Christian life centered on Jesus are the five basic doctrines as described to us in Hebrews.

Hebrews 6:1–3

*Therefore, let us leave the word from the beginning of Christ and turn to full maturity and not lay a foundation again with the **repentance** of dead works and faith in God, the doctrine of ablutions and the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And this is what we will do if God permits.*

The writer of Hebrews lists the sequence of teachings in detail.

- We know that the Word has been given by God.
- Nothing has therefore been written that should not be considered.
- We should be aware that God means what He says and says what He means.

The sequence of teachings:

- *the penance of dead works*
- *faith in God,*
- *the doctrine of ablutions*
- *the laying on of hands,*
- *the resurrection of the dead*
- *the eternal judgment.*

Hebrews 6:3.

And this is what we want to do if God allows it.

Only when the basic teachings are understood will the Spirit of God allow the construction of the house of faith to continue.

If repentance was not understood as the first foundation, how can it be built on a non-existent foundation?

The seven letters

Ephesus – fallen out of first love

Revelation 2:3–5

*3 ... and you have endured [heaviness] and have steadfast endurance, and for the sake of my name you have worked and have not grown tired. 4 But I have against you that you have left your first love. 5 Now consider what thou hast fallen upon, and **repent** and do the first works! Otherwise, I will come over you quickly and will push your candlestick away from its place if **you do not repent!***

Smyrna - Community in Persecution

Revelation 2:9–11

I know your works and your tribulation and your poverty - but you are rich! - and the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but a synagogue of Satan. 10 Fear nothing of what you will suffer! Behold, the devil will throw many of you into prison so that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful to death, and I will give you the crown of life! 11 Whoever has an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the churches! Whoever overcomes will not suffer from the second death.

Pergamon – not resisting the teaching of Balaam

Revelation 2:12

*15 So you too have those who adhere to the teachings of the Nikolaid*s, which I hate. 16 **Repent!** Otherwise, I will come over you quickly and will wage war against them with the sword of my mouth.*

** Nicolaites are a group of followers of a heresy in the early church that taught immorality and idolatry. In Revelation 2:6 + 15, the churches of Ephesus and Pergamum are reprimanded for this, while Thyatira apparently resisted this false doctrine. The Nikolaites were associated with the type of heresy of Balaam, (NUM 25:1-2) specifically adhered to pagan festivals and they propagated this doctrine in the first century.*

Thyatira - tolerated a false prophetess

2:20–22

*But I have a little against you that you allow the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants to practice fornication and eat idolatry. 21 And I gave her time to repent of her fornication, and she did not repent. 22 Behold, I cast them upon a [sick] bed, and those who adultery with her into great tribulation if they **do not repent** of their works. 23 And I will beat their children with death; and all churches shall know that it is I who explored the kidneys and hearts. And I will give to each and every one of you according to his works. 24 But to you, and to the rest in Thyatira, I say unto all those who do not have this teaching, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say: I will not place any further burden on you; 25 But what ye have, hold on until I come!*

Sardis – the appearance of life and yet dead

Revelation 3:2.

*2 Wake up and strengthen the rest that was about to die! For I did not invent your works as complete before my God. 3 Now think of how you have received and heard and keep it and **repent!** If you do not wake up now, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.*

Philadelphia - small power full of Jesus dependent

Revelation 3:8–12

8 I know your works. Behold, I have given an open door before thee, which no one can close; for you have a little power and have kept my word and have not denied my name. 9 Behold, I deliver [unto you] from the synagogue of Satan of those who call themselves Jews, and they are not, but lie; behold, I will bring them to come and prostrate themselves before your feet and realize that I have loved thee. 10 Because you have kept the word of waiting for me, I too will save you from the hour of temptation that will come upon all over the earth to tempt

those who dwell on the earth. 11 I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have so that no one takes your victory wreath! 12 Whoever overcomes him will be made a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will never go out again; and I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven from my God, and my new name.

Frighteningly, five of the seven churches to whom the letter was addressed were asked by Jesus to repent, namely.

- *Ephesus - fallen out of first love*
- *Pergamus - succumbing to the teachings of Balaam*
- *Thyatira - tolerates false prophetess*
- *Smyrna - means to live but is dead*
- *Laodicea - the democratic community*

Only two churches were not asked to repent by Jesus.

It is significant which communities these were, Smyrna experienced persecution and passed. Philadelphia had a small power and was aware that it would not be able to do it without Jesus.

- *Sardis - Community in Persecution*
- *Philadelphia – small force completely dependent*

Laodicea - the democratic community

Revelation 3:14–17

*14 And write to the angel of the church in Laodicea: This is what the "Amen, the faithful and true witness, says, the beginning of God's creation: 15 I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. Oh, that you would be cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out (poop) from my mouth. 17 Because thou shalt say, "I am rich, and have become rich, and need nothing, and do not know that thou shalt be the wretched, and pitiful, and are poor and blind, and only, 18 I counsel thee to buy from me purified gold, that thou hast become rich; and white clothes, that thou shalt be clothed, and the shame of thy nakedness may not be revealed; and eye ointment, to anoint your eyes so that you may see. 19 I convict and chastise all whom I love. Now be diligent and **repent!** 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice, and opens the door, I shall go in and eat with him, and he with me. 21 Whoever overcomes, I will give unto him to sit with me on my throne, as I too have overcome, and sat down with my father on his throne. 22 Whoever*

has an ear, hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches!

Jesus' Counsel to the Church

- *How can it be that we can be so blinded and think that we have become mature and rich, need nothing, and do not know that we are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and bare.*
- *I think it's related to the fact that we weren't taught and preached the gospel, which is built on the liberating foundation of the Bible.*
- *This doctrine blinds us. We expect something very different from what the gospel promises us.*
- *Namely – only well-being and yes, no tribulation, no challenges, no difficulties, and no persecution etc.*
- *However, the Bible teaches us that we are no greater than our Master.*
- *He was despised, possessed everything and yet nothing, was lonely on God's own.*

Revelation 3:18–22

18 I advise thee to buy from me in the fire purified gold, that thou may become rich; and white clothes, that thou shalt be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not be revealed; and eye ointment, anointing your eyes so you can see

Gold purified in the fire

- *Is faith that has passed the test of fire.*
- *Buying the purified gold can cost a lot, such as persecution, slander, contempt but also the renunciation of habits, giving possessions, sharing, renunciation, allocating resources according to God's discretion.*

Revelation 3:19

I convict (rebuke them) and chastise everyone I love. Now be diligent and repent!

- *God's concept of love is very different from that of us humans. Because He loves us, He knows us right and is not afraid to chastise us.*

- *He wants to bring us to our destination and knows full well that our naughties cannot stand before Him.*
- *If he didn't ... We can calculate for ourselves where we would end up.*

A consideration

- *I think too often we blame Satan for inconveniences, challenges, persecutions, etc. that he did not cause.*
- *Shouldn't we ask first, Lord, is it you who disciplines me?*
- *Lord in what area and how will you correct me in your love for me.*
- *Where do I need to change my mind and turn the wrong way*

Necessity to survive in the coming time - The Ten Virgins

Matthew 25:1–8

1 Then the kingdom of heaven becomes like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 But five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 The foolish took their lamps, but they did not take oil with them. 4 But the clever ones took oil with them in their vessels, including their lamps. 5 When the bridegroom was absent for a long time, they all became sleepy and fell asleep. 6 But at midnight there was a loud cry: Behold, the Bridegroom is coming! Go out, meet him! 7 Then these virgins all stood up and finished their lamps. 8 But the foolish said unto the wise: Give us of your oil, for our lamps shall be extinguished. 9 Then the wise answered, saying, no, otherwise it would not be enough for us and for you; but go to the merchant and buy for yourself. 10 And when they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready went with him to the wedding, and the door was locked. 11 Later, the other virgins also came and said, Lord, Lord, open to us! 12 But He answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you. 13 Wherefore, watch! For you know neither day nor hour.

- *All ten were virgins*
- *A virgin is the symbol of purity in the Bible*
- *All were pure, immaculate, and untouched*
- *Everyone was waiting for the groom*
- *All ten became tired and slept*
- *All ten had their lamps, but only five had gotten extra oil.*
- *The time until the groom came was longer than they thought*
- *Their lamps went out*

- *When the groom finally arrived, only five had oil with which they could re-light their lamps.*
- *The virgins, who had not taken precautions, asked the others to share their oil with them.*
- *We know your answer – no – otherwise it is not enough for us either. Go to the merchants and buy for yourself.*

What does Jesus want to tell us with this example:

- *It is not even enough to have caught fire.*
- *We should make sure that we always have enough oil in stock.*
- *We must stock up on the merchants.*
- *That means nothing else than we must be willing to pay the price it costs to have our lamps filled with an extra portion.*
- *Shopping takes time and time is precious.*
- *We humans have nothing more precious than time because time is life.*
- *Are we willing to use the most precious thing we must supply ourselves with oil?*
- *Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit*
- *If we are willing to be filled by Him, we are ready to build a relationship with Jesus.*
- *A relationship without invested time is not a relationship.*
- *This is exactly what Jesus requires of his bride, to establish an intimate relationship of the heart with him.*

Persecution seen in a different way

A Romanian pastor, sometime after the fall of the communist dictatorship, reported the following harrowing observation about the church situation in his country.

He summarized his experiences as follows. There is an endurance test for us Christians, very different from what we imagined, with very different results than we expected.

The ultimate endurance test for Christians
The persecution by the system in Romania

*95% of Christians passed
5% failed this test*

Frightening is the fact that it is exactly the opposite with wealth and materialism:

*5% Only Christians passed this challenge, which brought with it wealth and materialism.
95% of Christians succumbed to temptations and delusions.*