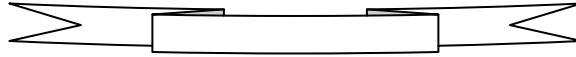


So Great Salvation Study Guide

Teaching Series Part 2 – Conviction & Repentance

By Paris Reidhead*

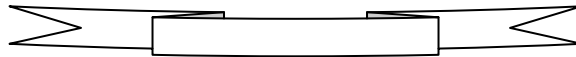
Pastor Reidhead set up this Bible Study Guide to accompany the “So Great Salvation - Study Guide I”. Below are his instructions on how to administer this study guide and questions.



Series I of “So Great Salvation” is composed of six sermons with eight correlating lessons. At the end of each chapter there are study questions. You will find the answers to these questions by carefully listening to the sermon and thoughtfully and prayerfully reading the text.

It is suggested that you first answer the questions of each chapter on a piece of notebook paper; then reread the chapter and listen again to the sermon to satisfy yourself that your answers are correct in relation to the material covered.

Then transfer your answers onto the study question sheet at the end of each chapter. Your carefully written answers will now become a valuable part of the study course of “So Great Salvation.”



CONVICTION

The second phase of the divine operation is conviction.

“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart I will send Him unto you, and when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness, because I go to my Father and ye see me no more; of judgment because the prince of this world is judged” (Joh. 16:7-11).

Have you ever had people come to you requesting prayer that a loved one might be saved? It is a serious responsibility to utter such a prayer. Imagine a mother requesting prayer that her daughter might be married. Some practical questions are in order. Does the young lady have any friends? Is she going with someone? Is she engaged? Perhaps it would be more sensible to pray that she'll become affable and pleasant so that she would attract a friend. And if that happens, the next step could be approached.

When you are talking about the unconverted, don't be hasty. Ask God to awaken them, if they are unawakened. If you sense they are awakened, pray that God will help you to use the Scripture in such a way as to see them brought to conviction. However, if they are to be brought under conviction, you must comprehend what sin is.

We must define sin precisely before we can expect to be effective in our ministry in helping people to come under conviction of sin. Most people have already accepted their own plan of salvation, however ridiculous it -may be. I have heard people say, “God has a great scale in the sky. He's putting all my good deeds on one side and my bad deeds on the other. If my good deeds outweigh my bad deeds, it will be all right for me.”

I. SIN RECOGNIZED AS A CRIME — NATURE OF SIN

Is sin a congenital disease or is it a crime? Are people in trouble primarily because they inherited something from their forefathers, or are they in trouble because, at the age of accountability, they deliberately turned to their own way? They chose

to follow in the path of their progenitors by the committal of their will to the principle and practice of pleasing themselves as the end of their being.

Sin is NOT a congenital disease. God's Word deals with sin as a crime ... against God. Sin becomes a crime when mere man determines that he is going to defy the only One in the universe who is wise enough and big enough and good enough to govern and rule his life. The created challenges the Creator upon Whom he is dependent for life and breath and all things.

Sin is also moral insanity. Sin is treason against righteous government, open rebellion, where the only rule is self-pleasing. If a law of God stands between the individual and his appetites, God's law is forgotten; it is broken. The sinner then sees himself as the enemy of God. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). God is not the enemy of the sinner; the sinner becomes the enemy of God.

When I was in Bible School I visited men in jail and prison. In talking with men on the other side of the bars, I was astonished to learn of the miscarriage of justice in the-state of Minnesota ... almost 100%. I think I met only one prisoner who said he deserved to be in prison, that, in fact, the court was merciful not to exact the death penalty. All others had been sentenced, but in their own minds, they weren't convicted. Someone else was to blame.

II. CONVICTION DEFINED

In Unger's Bible Dictionary, written by Merrill F. Unger and published by Moody Press we read: "The meaning of conviction as a law term is 'being found guilty.' In common language it means 'being persuaded or convinced.' In theology it means 'being condemned at the bar of one's own conscience as a sinner in the view of the law of God.' It is the antecedent to repentance, and is often accompanied by a painful exposure to God's wrath. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, showing the heinousness of sin and the soul's exposure to divine wrath." (Page 219, Col. 22, pp.3)

To summarize, conviction is that state of the mind and heart in which the individual takes side with God against himself. The Word says that "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Conviction is the work of the Spirit of God on the human heart which causes the individual to realize something of the enormity of the crime that has been committed.

The account of Joseph's encounter with his brethren, recorded in Genesis 42:7-21, illustrates true conviction as experienced by the brothers of Joseph. Joseph is in Egypt and has been there for many years.

"And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, 'From the land of Canaan to buy food.'"

"And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him."

"And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come."

"And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come."

"We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies."

"And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come."

"And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not."

"And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies;"

"Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither."

"Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies."

“And he put them all together into ward three days.”

“And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do and live; for I fear God.”

“If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses:”

“But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.”

“And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.”

These brothers who had so arrogantly sold Joseph into slavery have now come to the place that they are under conviction. They have taken sides with God against themselves. “We are verily guilty.”

In Numbers 21:7 you will see another instance of conviction: “Therefore, the people came to Moses and said, ‘We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee. Pray unto the Lord that He take away the serpent from us.’” And Moses prayed for them.

And again in Ezra 9:6: “And said, Oh my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God, for our iniquities have increased over our head and our trespasses have grown up into the heavens. Since the days of our father have we been in a great trespass unto this day, and for our iniquities have we, our kings and our priests, been delivered into the hands of the kings of the land to the sword, to captivity and to spoil and to confusion as it is this day.”

Why should we need such an awful work of the Spirit of God so as to produce conviction? Recently a preacher was heard to say, “Never preach the law. God is love ... just talk to sinners about the love of God. Everybody knows he has sinned.” But to the contrary, we read in Galatians 3:24, “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us into Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” And in Romans 3:20, “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

I have no intention of giving up the Word of God to accept the metaphysics of certainly taught preachers. The Word says, “by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

This truth, namely conviction of sin by God the Holy Spirit, was clearly taught by Matthew Henry in the early 1700s. In his commentary, Volume V, Matthew to John, in the portion of John 16:3-11, he writes the following excerpts:

“The coming of the Spirit was absolutely necessary to the carrying of Christ's interests on earth. When He is come, He will reprove, that is, He will convince the world, by your ministry concerning sin, righteousness and judgment.”

1) The Spirit, by the Word of God and the consciences of men, is a reprover; ministers (and all witnesses for Christ in general) are reprovers by offices and by them the Spirit reproves.

2) The word reprove or convince is a law term, and speaks of the office of a judge in summing up the evidence, and setting the matter which has long been considered in a clear and true light.

Convincing work is the Spirit's work: He can do it effectively, but none but He; man may open the cause, but it is the Spirit only who can open the heart.

The Spirit is called the Comforter (vs. 9) and here it is said He shall convince. The method the Spirit takes is first, to lay open the wound, and then to apply healing medicine.

The Spirit is sent to convince sinners of sin, not barely to tell them of it; in conviction there is more than this. It is to prove it upon them, and force them to own it; that is to ‘Make them to know their abominations.’ The Spirit convicts of the fact of sin, that we have done ill; of the folly of sin, that we have acted against right reason and our true interests; of the filth of sin, that by it we are become odious to God.”

III. HOW DOES CONVICTION OCCUR?

How does conviction occur? What happens? In the book Gospel Themes, sermons preached by Charles G. Finney, there is a message in which Finney speaks about “the inner revelation” and the “outer revelation.” He used an illustration appropriate to his day.

Flour mills consisted of two big stones, lined and grooved. A water wheel was turned by a stream of water in such a way that the lower stone was forced to turn one way and the upper stone the opposite direction. When grain was placed between the two stones, the grinding friction of one against the other separated the wheat from the chaff and produced flour.

What Charles Finney said was this: when you bring the outer revelation of the law in the Word to bear upon the inner revelation written on the heart the human spirit is caught between, and that person is brought under conviction of sin. The upper millstone is the law written; the lower millstone is the law in the heart. Whenever the Gospel is preached, the revelation of the law of God as given in the Word grinds against the law written in every human heart causing that person to become a candidate for grace. Without both the “inner revelation” and the “outer revelation” the person remains content. “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” It is imperative that we learn how to use the law so as to bring conviction to the human spirit.

How do primitive people know it is wrong to lie, to steal and to kill? Who taught them? They have never had an introduction to the Ten Commandments.

“For when the Gentiles (the heathen) which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another” (Rom. 2:14-15).

As there are verses having to do with awakening, there are Scriptures having to do with conviction. Start with the Ten Commandments (Exo. 20:1-17). That’s the law, but the law is contained elsewhere in the Scriptures. Everything that indicates the holiness of God is in effect the law.

Some of the effects of the law applied to the conscience are unrest, distress, concern, unhappiness. Unrest will give way to a burden on the mind and on the spirit. What appears to be depression may be the Spirit of God dealing with a person about his sin.

David talked about misery. “For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest” (Psa. 51:3-4).

In Acts we are told that they had the sting of conscience. Their minds were stung by what they heard from Peter.

“As he (Paul) reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Act. 24:35).

Terror struck their hearts. All these things were accompanied by conviction.

The publican went down to the temple. He stood in front of the veil of the temple, beat his breast, with downcast eyes, and said, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.”

The Pharisees stood aside, saying, “Thank God, we are not like this fellow is.” The publican was convicted; the others were not.

When you find an awakened sinner, don't lead him to a premature assumption that because he has an intellectual agreement with the plan of salvation that he can assume he is a Christian.

Conviction is real. God has a reason why He said the Holy Spirit would convict of sin, because His purpose wasn't just to give us “a hell insurance policy.” His purpose was to save us from our sin. Until we discover what our sins are we really aren't

candidates to be saved from them. If you are truly born of God, it shouldn't be too difficult for you to remember when you were lost. It wasn't hard for me.

CONCLUSION

Charles Haddon Spurgeon. was from 1854 to 1891 pastor of Park Street Baptist Church, which later became the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, England. This prestigious church had a membership of nearly 5000 persons and an average Sunday audience of about 10,000 people, morning and evening. He preached an incisive sermon on Psalm 7:12, with the title "Turn or Burn." (The Treasury of the Old Testament, Volume 2, pages 365-366.)

In the introduction to this message, he writes of his generation what would be equally true of ours: "This evil generation hath labored to take away from God the sword of His justice; they have endeavored to prove to themselves that God will 'clear the guilty', and will be no means 'punish iniquity, transgression and sin.' The cry of the age is that God is merciful, God is love. Aye; who said He was not? But remember it is equally true; God is just, severely and inflexibly just. He was not God if He were not just; He could not be merciful if He were not just, for punishment of the wicked is demanded by the highest mercy to the rest of mankind

"How few there are who will solemnly tell us of the judgment to come. They preach God's love and mercy as they ought to do, and as God commanded them; but to what avail is it to preach mercy unless they preach also the doom of the wicked? And how shall we hope to effect the purpose of the preaching unless we warn men that if they 'turn not, He will whet His sword'?" (Psa. 7: 12)

CONVICTION

1. What does Isaiah 53:6 say about sin in the second part of the verse?
2. What are the four criminal aspects of sin?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
3. What definition does Dr. Unger give of conviction of sin?
4. What statement is made by the brothers of Joseph to indicate that they were convicted of their sin?
5. What two verses of Scripture teach us how we know we are sinners?
 - a)
 - b)
6. What verses of Scripture teach us that the “heathen” are responsible for their sin? Quote, giving references.
7. Explain what Charles Finney’s illustration of upper and lower millstones means to you.

8. Did David reveal conviction of his sin? What reference?
9. Where in the Bible do you find the statement of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinners"?
10. What did the angel announcing the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ say He was to accomplish?
11. What did Charles Spurgeon state his generation had taken away from God? Would this also be true of this generation?
12. What Scripture reference indicates that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict of sin?

REPENTANCE

The person who is awakened must be so carefully and prayerfully dealt with that soon real conviction by God the Holy Spirit, through the Word, is evident in that person's heart. This will be made known by the attitude and words of the individual whom God is bringing to Himself. This is not the end of the divine operation, but rather a very important step.

I. THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE

When the commands of the Word of God are emphasized to the person who is under conviction, it becomes clear that God requires repentance as the response. This person has discovered that sin is a crime against our holy, just and loving God who “takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live” (Eze. 33:11).

“Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?” (Eze. 18:23) “Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby you have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O House of Israel” (Eze. 13:31).

John the Baptist came preaching repentance: “Repent, ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mat. 3:2). Our Lord Jesus Christ declared, “Except ye repent you shall all likewise perish” (Luk. 13:3-5).

Peter, on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:30) affirmed, “Repent” and also on the day of the healing of the lame man at the temple gate, “Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that you sins may be blotted out” (Act 4:19).

Paul, at Miletus, when he met with the elders from the church at Ephesus, said: “And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Act 20:20-21).

II. TEACHING AGAINST REPENTANCE

When I was in Bible School in Minnesota from 1935 to 1940, I was systematically taught that “repentance was Jewish and was not for today.” Accepting this, I dutifully avoided any mention of repentance in preaching and in witnessing. Fortunately, someone gave me a copy of a volume written by that great Biblical expositor, Dr. Harry A. Ironsides, for many years pastor of Moody Church in Chicago, and a dedicated dispensationalist. The title of the book by Dr. Ironside was “Except Ye Repent.” In this book Dr. Ironside strongly disagreed with his dispensationalist brethren, affirming that repentance is not only for the Jews, but is for everyone, as declared in Acts 17:30, “but now (God) commandeth all men everywhere to repent.”

It was indeed a great day for me when I felt freed from the shackles of that restrictive and erroneous teaching and began to study for myself what the Bible teaches about this most important prerequisite for saving faith. During that study I found a lot of nonsense about the subject of repentance. The way many preachers talk about it and write about it, one would think that repentance means being sorry for sin. I've even heard them say, “Sorry for sin, sorry enough to quit.”

III. WHAT REPENTANCE IS NOT

Let us look carefully at II Cor. 7:8-11. “For though I made you sorry with a letter I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.

Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.”

“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death...”

“For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.”

This text does not say that “repentance” is godly sorrow. Rather, it clearly says that godly sorrow “works repentance not to be repented of.”

Let me illustrate. Picture a hammer, a nail and a board. The hammer, when used to pound, works the nail into the board. However, the hammer remains a hammer, the nail is still a nail, and the board is still a board, though it now has a nail in it.

So God uses sorrow (as the hammer) to work repentance (which is the nail) into the heart (which corresponds to the board.) Sorrow is sorrow; repentance is repentance, and the heart is still the heart, though now with the “nail” of repentance firmly in it.

Let us be finished with thinking of repentance as being sorrow.

Whereas repentance is not sorrow, neither is it meritorious work. There is no merit gained by the sinner when he repents. Rather, it is a change of attitude.

Imagine the folly of a murderer who goes into the presence of the judge to ask for leniency or release, who, when questioned as to what he thinks about his crime of murder, replies: “It wasn't my fault; it was my parents' fault. I am glad that I killed him, and when I get out, I intend to kill others also.”

Perhaps in our twisted legal thinking this might be overlooked, but certainly not by a just and holy God, nor by our Lord Jesus Christ who declared, “Except ye repent you shall all likewise perish!” (Luk. 13:3-5)

IV. WHAT REPENTANCE IS

What does the word “repentance” mean? The Greek verb means “to change one's mind”, that is to change one's purpose from what it has been to what it ought to be. Earlier we were considering what sin is, and it was seen that sin is a crime; sin is the committal of the will to the principle of governing one's life to please himself. In other words, the Scripture says, “All have sinned”. At the age of accountability everyone has chosen to govern his own life and please himself.

Throughout the centuries theologians have caused countless problems because some have tried to answer questions that the Bible never answered. The Bible doesn't tell us why everyone sinned ... it tells us THAT everyone has sinned. The moment that one goes beyond the Scripture one is in metaphysics and philosophy. We should adhere to the Scripture. There are many theories espoused, but I am going to hold fast to the Word of God. God told us THAT “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

The mind-set of the sinner is to do what he wants to do. Some people may be far more refined and cultured than others, but the Lord Jesus gave the all-inclusive warning, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

V. REPENTANCE DEFINED

Repentance means to change one's mind, and therefore, one's purpose from self-pleasing to an attitude expressed by “Lord, I'm going to please and serve you as long as I live.” Now, that's repentance ... a change of mind; a change of intention; a change of purpose; a change of practice. It has no merit with it. Nothing can be earned. No works can be done. Sinners are brought to realize the enormity of their crime. The repentant sinner recognizes that he has lived to please himself and gratify his appetites. Now he has changed. He is not striking a deal with God; he is not trying to make any kind of a bargain. He is simply saying: “From today on the purpose of my life is to please God.”

The following are excerpts from Charles Haddon Spurgeon's sermon on Psalm 7:11, entitled “Turn or Burn”: (The Treasury of the Old Testament, pages 366-367)

“In the first place, ‘What is meant here by turning?’ In the second place, let us dwell on the necessity there is for men's turning, otherwise God will punish them ...”

“The turning here is actual not fictitious ... not that which stops with promises and vows, but that which deals with the real acts of life...It is not thy promise of repentance ...; it is not thy vow; it is not thy solemn declaration; it is not the tear ...; it is not the transient emotion which constitutes a real turning to God. There must be a true and actual abandonment of sin, and a turning

unto righteousness in real act and deed in every-day life ... Repentance to be true, to be evangelical, must be a repentance which really affects our outward conduct.”

“In the next place, repentance to be sure must be entire (and not partial)...It is not the giving up of one sin, nor fifty sins which is true repentance; it is the solemn renunciation of every sin... ‘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 or genuine...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... For repentance to be sincere it must be entire repentance.”

“Again, God says, ‘If he turn not, He will whet His sword.’ He means immediate repentance... Put no faith in the repentance you promise your-selves on your death beds... If you repent not in health, you will never repent in sickness. When death is gradual, it affords but an ill season for repentance. Do not men drop down dead in the streets? Do not they expire in their business? God saith, ‘Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, when your fathers tempted me and proved me.’ You may never have another day to repent in. The Jewish rabbis said, ‘Let every man repent one day before he dies, and since he may die tomorrow, let him take heed to turn from his evil ways today.’ Immediate repentance is that which God demands, for He hath never promises thee that thou shalt have any hour to repent in, except the one that thou hast now.”

“Furthermore, the repentance here described as absolutely necessary is hearty repentance. It is not a mock tear—a pretended repentance. True repentance is a turning of the heart as well as of the life; it is the giving up of the whole soul to God, to be His forever and ever. Let none fancy to have repented when (there is) only a false and fictitious repentance; let none take that to be the work of the Spirit which is only the work of poor human nature; let no one dream of having savingly turned to God when, perhaps, they have only turned to themselves. Remember, it must be a turning of the whole soul ...unto God.”

“And lastly, upon this point, this repentance must be perpetual. It is not turning to God today that will be proof that one is a true convert; it is forsaking ones sin throughout ones entire life. To be upright for a week will not be proof that one is saved; it is a perpetual abhorrence of

evil. The change which God works is neither a transitory nor superficial change...One may today go home and pretend to pray; one may today be serious, tomorrow honest, and the next day pretend to be devout, but yet if one returns, as Scripture has it, ‘like the dog to its vomit, and like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire’, such repentance shall but sink one deeper into hell, instead of being proof of divine grace in one’s heart.”

“It is very hard to distinguish between legal repentance and evangelical repentance. Legal repentance is a fear of damning: evangelical repentance is a fear of sinning. Legal repentance makes one fear the wrath of God: evangelical repentance makes one fear the cause of that wrath, even sin. When a man repents with that grace of repentance which God the Spirit works in him, he repents not of the punishment which follows the deed, but of the deed itself... It must be a hatred for sin.”

When a man is possessed of true and evangelical repentance he not only hates sin for its own sake, but loathes it so extremely and utterly that he feels that no repentance of his own can avail to wash it out, and he acknowledges that it is only by an act of sovereign grace that his sin can be washed away... True repentance makes a (person) feel, that ‘Could his zeal no respite know, Could his tears forever flow, All for sin could not atone, Christ must save, and Christ alone.’¹

“We must humbly confess that we deserve God’s wrath, and that we can- not avert it by any deeds of our own, and we must put our trust solely and entirely in the blood and merits of Jesus Christ. If one has not so repented, in the words of David, ‘If you turn not, He will whet His sword.’”

¹ “Rock of Ages” By Augustus M. Toplady, 1776.

What does it mean? A committal of the will to the principle and the practice of pleasing God ... in everything ... from that time on. Repentance is the prerequisite to forgiveness, to pardon. This we must tell every sinner to whom we speak who is a candidate for grace, who has discovered his lostness. God must be sovereign, because He deserves to be obeyed and served.

But what can we say to that person who says that he does not find it in his heart to repent? He knows that God's commandment to repent is holy, just and good, but his heart is so hardened that he does not find it in him to repent. For such a person we do have a message. It is the word given by the Apostle Peter in Acts 5:29-32:

“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.”

“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.”

“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.”

“And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.”

Let the one with awakened conscience, who is under conviction, but knows he has not repented of his sin, ask the One whom God exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, beseeching this loving Lord to help and enable him to repent. Our Lord Jesus will honor such a request where desire and purpose are real.

This message of repentance needs to be understood and must be proclaimed. It is so important. I never thought that I would live long enough to see a famine for the hearing of the Word of God. I believe that one of the lost notes in modern preaching is the use of the law to bring conviction, leading to repentance.

The Word of God must penetrate the minds of awakened individuals until the Spirit of God causes them to discover themselves, to take sides with God against themselves, as they are brought under conviction.

Not until there is awareness that sin is a crime against God is it appropriate to talk to a person about repentance. At that time those Scriptures must be brought to bear upon a person's mind, including the verses which affirm that “God has commanded men everywhere to repent.”

Those under conviction of sin must understand that repentance precedes faith.

Obviously, the final question which will be asked is “What does it mean to repent?” At that time it can be reemphasized that the essence of sin is anarchy. What is required is a total change of mind, a change of policy, a change of practice from pleasing self to a commitment to please God. If a person is ever to know forgiveness and pardon and eternal life, the issue must be settled as to who is in control.

I have frequently heard people say, “I have accepted Jesus as my Savior.” Nowhere in the Bible are we instructed to “accept Jesus as Savior.”

Peter declares to the council in Jerusalem: “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 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” (Act. 5:30-31).

“God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Act. 2:36).

The Apostle John affirms: “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name” (Joh. 1:12).

To Mary, the mother of our Lord, the angel declared: “And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and his kingdom shall be no end” (Luk. 1:30-33).

Therefore, to receive Him is to believe on His name. Whereas, His name is Jesus, it is Jesus whom the Jews crucified. He was raised Jesus ... “who is both Lord and Christ; Prince and Savior, Son of the Highest of whose kingdom there shall be no end.”

Paul declared to the Philippian jailer: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” (Act. 16:31).

This is strikingly different from “accepting Jesus as Savior” so commonly heard today.

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus (Jesus to be Lord) and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. 10:9).

VI. REPENTANCE PROVEN

Compare this with Philippians 2:11, “and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

In the Expositor's Greek Testament, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll, in volume 2, page 671, we read: “... the Gospel, as God's word concerning His Son and faith in Him. We confess it when we say, Jesus is Lord. The exaltation of Jesus is the fundamental Christian confession, and presupposes the resurrection; and it is this exaltation which here (and in Php. 2:11 and I Cor. 12:3) is meant by His Lordship ... he who believes in his heart that God raised Christ from the dead can 1 confess with his mouth ... that Jesus is Lord ... His exaltation is that of one who has borne our sins, and the sense of this gives passion to the love with which believers confess Him Lord.

We have previously seen that the essence of sin is “I'm going to do what I want to do.” The essence of repentance is “From today on I'm going to please God.” In repentance there is no intrinsic saving merit. It is rather a change of attitude, a change of mind, a change of intention, a change of purpose ... from self-pleasing to God-pleasing. We are told that we are to be transformed by the renewing or the changing of our minds. If, at any point in our Christian pilgrimage, we discover that our mind is not in accord with His, we don't have to fight the issue again. It has already been settled. We are going to persevere in the mind-set of conformity to His mind as He has revealed it.

REPENTANCE

1. Three references from the Book of Ezekiel are cited. Give the reference and portion of each verse referred to.
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
2. In what Scripture references does our Lord Jesus Christ clearly enforce the necessity of repentance? Give reference and verse.
3. To whom did the Apostle Paul refer in Acts 20:20, 21? Were they Jews or Gentiles?
4. Generally the people who think of themselves as “dispensationalist” consider repentance to be Jewish and not for today. Who among that company took exception to that view and what was the title of the book he wrote on that subject?
5. Do you consider that II Corinthians 7:8-11 teaches that “sorrow” for sin is repentance? Explain briefly.
6. Is repentance a “meritorious work” or a change of mind, attitude and purpose?

7. Charles Spurgeon is reported to have made three statements about repentance. What are they?
8. Is there any hope for the one who honestly says, "I can't repent."? Cite and quote reference.
9. When should "repentance" be emphasized to the person who is being witnessed to?
10. How has sin been defined in this study?
11. If the essence of sin is the decision to rule and direct one's own life, what does "repentance" mean?
12. How does the Lordship of Christ appear to the truly repentant person?

* Reference such as: Original Message Delivered at Bethany Fellowship, Minneapolis, MN on Wednesday Evening, June 10, 1987 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.