

Repentance means a Revolutionary Change

The word “repent” could mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people. Having a standard less than what the word *repent* truly means invalidates a person’s baptism. *Invalidate* means to take away the legal force of, or render ineffective.

It means it is possible that the Spirit can be held back from being imparted to a person (Eph 1:13), as in the example in Acts 8:13. It says the magician Simon *believed*, but we don’t know what kind of *belief* it was. As the story goes on, he is full of bitterness and everything else (Acts 8:20-23). When does it say they received the Holy Spirit? What happened?

“Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 8:17)

Therefore, they didn’t receive the Holy Spirit until the apostles came. Why didn’t they receive the Holy Spirit when Philip baptized them? So we see that that the Holy Spirit can be held back (Acts 8:15-16).

“For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Sovereign Yahshua.” (Acts 8:16)

Philip was an evangelist, and not an apostle, and it would have been beyond his grace to begin a new community. Philip was able to impart the Holy Spirit to the eunuch, who received the Holy Spirit as an individual. He told him exactly what was going to happen when he got back to Ethiopia. He didn’t just go his merry way.

“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.” (Acts 8:14)

Apostolic grace is to bring the people into obedience (Rom 1:5), and that is not given to evangelists to do. The people believed, but they didn’t receive the Holy Spirit until the apostles came. There can be many “believers” who have not received the gift of eternal life, which only the Spirit can impart as John 2:23-25.

In Island Pond many who received the word were baptized, about twenty people at the first baptism who came into the community. They received our Savior. An

evangelist can bring people to Messiah individually, but not as a community. But they can under the oversight of the apostles. Philip went there under the covering of the apostles. He was not lawless.

It was written down for us to show us something very important. It was written down so you would know what to say when someone asks you, “How come they didn’t receive the Holy Spirit?”

What does the word “repent” mean?

Look at the word “repent” in Mt 3:8 – what happens in repentance? What did Peter mean by repent in Acts 2:38? “*What must we do to be saved?*” they asked him. And in response, he said, “*You must repent and be baptized and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*”

Mt 3:8 says, “Bear fruit in keeping with *repentance.*”

What does Acts 26:20 mean?

*“But [Paul] declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should **repent**, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.”*

Therefore, we have to do works “befitting” repentance. *Befitting* means suitable, appropriate, worthy.

If those works aren’t done, it is probably not true faith a person has. The lack of works befitting repentance invalidates someone’s “faith.” Faith without works is dead (Jms 2:17). We are trying to establish this. We are commanded in the Bible in many places to do works. Certainly, we don’t work for salvation, but after we repent, we do works worthy of our repentance. Acts 2:38 is the answer to the question of verse 37. All the other words of verse 40 tell what he meant. If one did what the “many other words” entailed he would see what the word “repent” meant in Acts 26:20. “Do works befitting repentance.”

You will never be able to do the works without repenting, and you will never be able to do the works without receiving the Holy Spirit. The word *repent* means a revolutionary change. What does the word *revolution* mean?

It means an overthrow, a dramatic change in ideas or practice, one complete circular movement, a renunciation of your past religion, your past Jesus that didn't save you. It is a revolutionary change of one's mind so that he can see that he is in the clutches of the evil one, in his claws, and that his whole life must be given over to the Savior (2 Cor 5:15,17). Then his views, values, goals, goods, and ways are radically changed to comply with the standard of the word of God and His community. Our whole life is lived in a brand new environment and culture. Our mind, judgments, will, affections, behavior, lifestyle, motives, and plans are all involved. Repenting means starting to live a new life, as to be born again.

Acts 2:44-45 and 4:32-37 is a radical change of life (1 Jn 2:4,6,15). It is a conversion from one kingdom to another, from Satan to our Father. What did the king in Lk 14:32 have to do? He had to take on another ruler. He wasn't the ruler. He had to renounce his own rule and take on another's rulership. Revolutionary means a fundamental change, a renunciation of Satan's rulership (1 Jn 5:19; 3:8; and 2 Cor 4:4).

"In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Messiah who is the image of God." (2 Cor 4:4)

A lot of translations say "god of this world." Satan is the god of this age. We have to renounce that god. That means we are no longer under him.

"We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." (1 Jn 5:19)

The whole world lies under the sway of the evil one.

"The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil." (1 Jn 3:8)

We are to destroy the works of the evil one with Him, too. That is what we have become allied with Him to do, put all of His enemies under His feet (Heb 10:13).

Repentance is an Irreversible Decision

Repentance is an irreversible decision. You can't reverse it, if your repentance brought about the sealing of the Holy Spirit. Eph 1:13 – When we go into the water we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. You can see it in people's lives by the stands they take. If it weren't an irreversible decision, you wouldn't be *sealed* by our Father with the Holy Spirit. You must come to that place of repentance or revolutionary change.

We are sealed *with* the Holy Spirit...

“Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.” (Eph 1:14)

“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” (Eph 4:30)

He is the guarantee. We can guarantee He is not going to leave us or forsake us (Heb 12:5). That seal is like the King's signet ring being stamped on it. As they say today about something that is sealed, “It's a done deal.”

Repentance is an irreversible decision to follow our Master where He is. You have to follow our Master *where He is*. That is an important thing, for your baptism doesn't work anywhere else. Even in the case of the eunuch who was baptized in the desert, surely the apostles either sent a delegation to Ethiopia or he came back to Jerusalem after he got freed from his responsibilities to the queen. We don't know which happened, but we know what we would do.

Jn 12:25 is that repentance: *“You have to hate your life in the world.”* To hate one's own life in this world is the pre-requisite to eternal life. You have to come out of the world, out of Satan's rulership, and into the kingdom of the new ruler (Jn 12:26). You come into a different sovereignty. Jn 12:25 is essential in repentance:

“He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.” (Jn 12:25-26)

Jn 12:25-26 is expressed in baptism, as in Acts 2:28,40,41. This is where we take our stand. Our repentance is an irreversible decision, but our Father is the one who knows whether we have made it or not. He knows our heart. Then He imparts His Holy Spirit to us on that basis. People who look back didn't make that irreversible decision. People who look back are not worthy of the Kingdom.

So, what is repentance? What did you learn this morning?

Elliot – Repentance is a revolutionary change.

ha-êmeq – The word *repent* is a despised word in the world. They have seen people marching around with signs, “Repent or Perish.” They have no idea of what *repent* really means, but it is the essence of our whole life. I hope we don't lose what we have learned today about repentance, for it is a key to understanding, even for our children when they go through bar mitzvah. It is foundational to our whole life. They can repent and there is hope for them.

If we really knew what that word meant, we wouldn't use that word in the sense of, “I want to repent to you for this or that.” We actually mean, “I am sorry and I want to apologize to you for what I did.” You can't put the true definition of repentance “make a revolutionary change” in that sentence, “I want to repent to you” for doing such and such.

Soreph Gamaliel – I was thankful to hear about repentance, coming out of the authority you were under, overthrowing the rule of the evil one in our lives. It is a renunciation. Even in the world today if a judge hears that you are sorry for what you did and that you are renouncing your former way of life, he has mercy on you (if he believes you). If the world recognizes the power of renunciation, how much more should we?

When we wake up in the morning and pray, telling Yahshua He is our Sovereign, we are renouncing our own rule of our lives. We tell Him we want to do His will and hear from Him and speak for Him. We live for Him. I can remember being dead in the world, surrounded by all these other dead people, so hopeless, lost, and alone. Really, I am just thankful I could wake up this morning and pray. That is what I came here with, thankfulness.

Abigail shel Yowceph — To repent is to have a fundamental change, a revolutionary change, an overthrow of the evil one in our lives, a renunciation of any past religion. Repentance is the essential condition to receiving the Holy Spirit and being sealed. Repentance is really powerful because it causes such radical, fundamental, and revolutionary change as we turn our hearts to our Father and begin to do the works “befitting” of repentance. Long ago I heard that it is as if you are walking in one direction. Then you see your sin and to repent is to turn 180 degrees and begin walking the opposite way. It is the essence and root of our whole life, releasing true forgiveness from our Father and our brothers. Then we are free, truly free to love and obey because of the marvelous provision that is our Master’s sacrifice. We can repent and be forgiven continually, otherwise we’ll stain our garment, walk without grace and become useless. I am so thankful to understand the true meaning of repentance for it gives me hope to walk day by day with a good conscience.

Faith and Works

So, when it says “DO WORKS BEFITTING REPENTANCE,” we can see the great error in those who say that works have nothing to do with salvation. That is why Martin Luther thought James was an epistle of straw. The book of James has to do, he thought, with *works salvation*. If you will look in Jms 2:24, it says we are justified by doing works, but what it means is that our faith is justified by the works we do.

“You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.” (Jms 2:24)

It is the works we do after repentance that justify our faith. The word justified is a tricky one. Our Master Yahshua died for us, and our faith in Him grants us forgiveness for our sins. Our works don’t gain us salvation or forgiveness, but they do validate our belief. Our works justify our belief. What was it that Paul said? “Do works befitting of repentance.” (Acts 26:20)

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” (Jms 2:26)

The works justify, or validate the faith. What if one claims to have repented and is not doing those works? What if someone is not doing Eph 2:10? We are saved by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-10). We have to have grace first, for it brings us to the place

where we can hear and have faith. So, we are saved by faith in order to go the good works prepared for us to do in the Body of Messiah. If anyone is not doing those works to build the Body up as it says in Eph 4:16, then he hasn't been baptized into the Body.

What if a person has faith to believe in the resurrection, but doesn't do the works prepared for him to do? He may have faith, saying he believes in the resurrection, but if he is not doing the works befitting of repentance, he doesn't really believe. He doesn't believe in his *heart*, as Rom 10:9-10 says.

Kepha – Isn't that where much of Christianity is? Could a person who "believes" like that be worthy of the nations?

They could be. It depends on how many converts he has made, whether he has gone around deceiving a lot of people. Look at 1 Jn 2:4. It tells about the one who claims to know Him, but doesn't obey His commandments, that he is a liar and the truth, as he claims it to be, is not in him. So, if he claims to know Him to the extent that he goes around making converts without giving them the commandments, then his character is exhibited in verse 4. He is a liar. We have to be careful of that too, making disciples of people, teaching them to obey all His commandments.

But a lot of other people don't know the difference, and they want to do well, but faith has not been imparted to them. We have to judge by the heart. Rom 10:9-10 goes along with Rom 10:17. Paul was a righteous sent one. Faith comes by hearing the word of Messiah. People hear and believe that our Father raised our Master from the dead. So, faith had not been given to them to believe in their hearts (the people Kepha is talking about). Our Father doesn't give that unless they can live in the Body of Messiah. Everyone calls the church the Body of Christ, but it is just the mystical Body. It isn't really the Body of Christ, for there they are not serving our Master daily, encouraging their brothers, serving the Body. We are not judging everyone by this, for many of our parents were nice people. Our Father knows the hearts of every man and woman, whether they wanted to do good or not.

To follow our Master requires that we make an irreversible decision, but our Father is the one who knows whether we have made it or not. He knows our heart. Then He imparts His Holy Spirit to us on that basis. Like Rebecca someday will make an irreversible decision to follow our Master Yahshua and her imma. Like Levi will, setting his face like flint, not looking back. People who look back didn't make that irreversible decision. People who look back are not worthy of the Kingdom.

When our Master was baptized, the dove came upon Him, telling Him He was "My Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then unshakeable certainty came upon Him. It must come upon us also, to put our hand to the plow and not look back.