

# “Repentance” Word Study

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Please note: Appendices A and B are a boring read. They are intended for research and documentation. Appendix C is beneficial to read.

## Introduction:

There has been much confusion and damage caused among both believers and the unsaved by the misunderstanding of, and the misuse of the words “repent/repentance.” If we were to ask the average churchgoer today what is required for a person to do in order to go to heaven when they died, probably many would reply “repent of your sins” and perhaps include one or two additional requirements such as believe in Jesus or live a good life, etc. It is likely that very few of these have followed that reasoning through to determine exactly what this means or entails, or even if there are Biblical grounds for their response.

Part of this confusion is due to the modern-day definition of the word in contrast to how the Bible uses it. Most modern definitions for repent/repentance usually are “to be penitent,” “turn from sin,” “be sorry for sin,” or similar.<sup>1</sup> We believe that this confusion is part of Satan’s strategy and pattern to counterfeit God’s truth which can hinder unbelievers from being saved and believers from growing in grace. The devil is a liar and a murderer (John 8:44) and he endorses for us to settle for man’s righteousness instead of God’s perfect righteousness for our eternal life (Isa. 64:6; 2 Cor. 11:13-15).

Much of this misunderstanding was probably initiated by early religious leaders who believed that one must *do penance* in order to receive eternal life, and therefore translated related passages as such. We quote from Part One of Dr. Bob Wilkin’s doctoral dissertation on repentance:

### “Repentance Defined as Contrition, Confession, and Performing Prescribed Acts of Penance

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary> “to feel or show that you are sorry for something bad or wrong that you did and that you want to do what is right;” <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/> “to be sorry you did or did not do something.”

The apostolic fathers taught that in order to retain salvation from eternal judgment one had to feel sorry for and confess his post-baptismal sins to a priest and then do whatever acts of penance were prescribed by the priest.<sup>2</sup> The Latin Fathers translated, or rather mistranslated, the NT words *metanoeo* and *metanoia* to reflect their theological bias. They translated those terms as *poenitentiam agite* and *poenitentia*, “to do acts of penance” and “acts of penance,” respectively.<sup>3</sup> Those mistranslations unfortunately became part of the Old Latin and then the Latin Vulgate versions of the Bible. It was not until the Reformation that those translations were given a serious and widespread challenge.”<sup>4</sup>

If the *unbeliever* hears an unclear or inaccurate gospel message, then it is less likely that he will believe in Jesus and be saved (2 Cor. 4:4; John 3:16). The frequently heard “gospel”

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<sup>2</sup> See Hermas, *Mandate*, 4. 3. 6; Clement of Rome, *First Epistle*, 8-9; and Polycarp, *Philippians*, 2.

<sup>3</sup> See William Douglas Chamberlain, *The Meaning of Repentance* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1943), 27-28; Edgar R. Smothers, “The New Testament Concept of Metanoia,” *Classical Bulletin* 10 (1933): 7-8; Aloys Herman Dirksen, *The New Testament Concept of Metanoia* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1932), 66-67; and John Cecil Anderson, “Repentance in the Greek New Testament” (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1959), 14ff.

<sup>4</sup> This paragraph, including footnotes is from “Part 1: The Doctrine of Repentance in Church History” by Dr. Bob Wilkin. I would recommend the diligent student to read the whole paper along with many other excellent articles available at the same website. The complete study can be found at the following URLs:

Part 1: The Doctrine of Repentance in Church History

<http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1988ii/wilkin.html>

Part 2: The Doctrine of Repentance in the Old Testament”

<http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1989i/Wilkin.html>

Part 3: New Testament Repentance: Lexical Considerations

<http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1989ii/Wilkin.html>

Part 4: New Testament Repentance: Repentance in the Gospels and Acts

<http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1990i/wilkin.html>

Part 5: New Testament Repentance: Repentance in the Epistles and Revelation

<http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1990ii/wilkin.html>

Part 6: How to Communicate the Doctrine of Repentance Clearly

<http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1991i/wilkin.html>

Due to subsequent Bible study, Dr. Wilkin later adopted a different view of repentance than indicated in his earlier paper on the subject. (See “Does Your Mind Need Changing? Repentance Reconsidered,” by Robert N. Wilkin, at <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1998i/Wilkin.html>). This writer also encountered a similar experience. I had known for years that the Greek word translated “repentance” meant “a change of mind.” I inferred that this meant a change of mind about Jesus, how sin is paid for, and a resultant belief in Him. This interpretation does not conflict with the basic premise of salvation by faith/belief alone in Jesus, but my later study brought me to another conclusion which I believe concurs not only with the Biblically congruent faith-alone in Jesus-alone message for eternal life, but also with the rest of the Word on the subject. I then read a study by Zane Hodges who had already been where I had been and had progressed much further while refining many of the details in the process. Hodges’ honest and thorough study “connected the dots” for me.

I suggest any serious student to honestly read and re-read this booklet. It is “*Harmony With God: A Fresh Look at Repentance*” by Zane Hodges. It is available for purchase from <http://www.faithalone.org/bookstore/books.html> or can be read online or downloaded:

Part 1 [http://chafer.nextmeta.com/files/v8n3\\_1harmony\\_with\\_god\\_part\\_1.pdf](http://chafer.nextmeta.com/files/v8n3_1harmony_with_god_part_1.pdf)

Part 2 [http://chafer.nextmeta.com/files/v8n4\\_3harmony\\_with\\_god\\_part\\_2.pdf](http://chafer.nextmeta.com/files/v8n4_3harmony_with_god_part_2.pdf)

Part 3 [http://chafer.nextmeta.com/files/v9n1\\_2harmony\\_with\\_god\\_part\\_3.pdf](http://chafer.nextmeta.com/files/v9n1_2harmony_with_god_part_3.pdf)

The hard copy contains a very helpful scripture index.

message is to “repent of your sin (By that it is meant to turn from sin or at least be sufficiently sorrowful for it) and believe in Jesus to be eternally saved.” Besides the fact that there is *not one verse* in the Bible that even uses the terms “repent or repentance of sin,” this additional requirement would add man’s imperfect and insufficient works to Jesus’ perfect payment. This would therefore negate its efficacy for the one attempting to achieve this feat as it would require partially trusting in one’s own works. It would also require an unbeliever to attain some level of a mature Christian life before he is born again and has the Holy Spirit to empower him to grow (i.e. requiring spiritual *growth* before spiritual *birth* had occurred). There would be no way for that person to know how much sin to turn from nor for how long. What if we tried to do this and later failed? By promoting this message we would be thrusting sincere and seeking people into a devastating and unbiblical quagmire.

If the *believer* is unclear in his Good News presentation, then he will become less fruitful in his primary purpose of glorifying God by bearing much fruit (John 15:8). In addition, he brings a curse from God upon himself for polluting the grace message (Gal. 1:6-10). The word “accursed” here (vs. 8, 9) has nothing to do with receiving eternal life as Paul included himself in that warning.<sup>5</sup> We are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8, 9), not by being obedient in our Christian life.

We frequently hear the so-called gospel message to unbelievers as “repent of your sins and believe in Jesus” in order to be eternally saved. This message is clearly adding a *second requirement* to the Bible’s *one* mandate of “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,…” (Acts 16:31). Since the Bible *never* mentions the terms “repent of sin” or “repentance of sin,” let alone making it a requirement for receiving eternal life,<sup>6</sup> should not this fact make us quite cautious of using the term in our gospel presentation? We receive eternal life solely by believing in Jesus to save us (John 3:16, et al).

Repentance is an important Biblical doctrine but its mishandling causes great harm to people and to the cause of Christ. It is essential to know what the word means in the Bible so that we can correctly apply the doctrine in obedience to our Savior.

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<sup>5</sup> The KJV translates “ἀνάθεμα” (an-ath'-em-ah) in Galatians 1:8, 9, as “let him be *accursed*.” The New International Version and several others *inaccurately* translate it as “let him be *eternally condemned*” or similar (Italics added). If this was so, then we would have to discard all the verses in the Bible related to eternal security. If eternal life is not eternal, then it is misnamed.

The Greek word “anathema” is used only six times in the NT. It appears that in only one instance could it be referring to an eternal type of judgment. In the others, including this one, it seems that the context demands “anathema” or “accursed” to be temporal in nature.

The NIV, by its own admission uses the concept of “dynamic equivalence” in its translation. In other words, it sometimes is not a very *literal* translation, but conveys what the translators think is the general meaning of the text. In some cases we believe that this becomes a transliteration and more of an interpretation or commentary than a literal translation. It also appears to me that, in some cases, theological bias has improperly influenced the “translation.” It is also the conviction of this writer that the NIV, along with almost all other modern translations uses a less reliable Greek text than does the KJV and NKJV. This is a separate issue not to be covered in this paper. Bible scholars are divided on this.

<sup>6</sup> The *concept* of “repentance of sin” *is* in the Bible and in the NT is usually a command to God’s people such as Israel or the believer of this age to correct some sin pattern in their lives and is related more directly to temporal consequences. For a more in-depth study of this facet of repentance, please keep reading. We will approach this important doctrine more in the NT portion of this study.

A major purpose of this study is to clarify the meaning of the words “repent” and “repentance” in both the OT and the NT and to discover what God means in the Bible when He uses these terms. We hope to expose not only the wrong use of the word but also to see in Scripture the truth of this important doctrine and how it applies to us. Let us see how it is used in the Bible by reviewing every use of repent/repentance and then drawing some conclusions from the facts that we discover. Some of these facts and observations will differ from some widely-held preconceived notions on this controversial subject. No one is obligated to concur with our conclusions but we suggest that it would be wise to not ignore or discard them without having good Scriptural support. We are open to correction and change but deem God’s Word as the authority over consensus opinion.<sup>7</sup>

### “Repentance” in the Old Testament:

In the OT there are two Hebrew words that are translated “repent” or its cognates. These are “נָחַם” (*naw-kham*) and “שׁוּב” (*shoob*). In the King James Version<sup>8</sup> “repent,” “repented,” etc. are found 46 times in 45 verses in the Old Testament. Please see [Appendix A](#) (Page 17) for the text of the complete list of verses.<sup>9</sup>

1. נָחַם - *naw-kham*’ The Hebrew word is used 108 times in the OT and is translated, “comfort” 57 times, “repent” 41 (plus 2 more including the noun), “comforter” 9, and “ease” 1. It can mean “regret,” “be moved to pity,” “have compassion” and similar.

2. שׁוּב - *shoob* A common word in the OT, used over 1,000 times and is usually translated “turn,” “turn back,” “return” or similar.

There are Bible teachers who are of the persuasion that “repentance” means that we must “be sorry for our sin,” “turn from our sins to God” or something similar in order to become eternally saved. Some of these same teachers remind us that in the OT that the word used for repent, “*shoob*,” means to “turn” or to “return” as in turning from sin or from sin to God. This logic is presented to justify the belief that we need to repent of sin or turn from sin in order to be eternally saved.

Their statement is accurate in that the Hebrew word “שׁוּב” (*shoob*) is often correctly translated as “turn” or “return,”<sup>10</sup> but the overall claim itself is misleading. A very important point that is

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<sup>7</sup> We receive occasional email in response to the Bible study articles on our website. They usually fit into one of three categories: 1. Bible questions which we are honored to answer as best as we can. 2. Those who appreciate the message of the website who are a definite encouragement to us. 3. Those who disagree with the message which we proclaim; the majority of which are referring to our stand on repentance. We welcome these also when it is done in the right spirit and with honest intent of sharing Scriptural truths with us. There also have been some in this group who have shown an unloving and unbiblical spirit in their response. Thankfully, we have been able to encourage several of these into some edifying and Biblical dialogue.

<sup>8</sup> The King James Version (AKA Authorized Version) is used in this paper unless otherwise noted. We are not “KJV- only” but for reasons that we believe to be valid, we almost exclusively use this version. Please contact us for more information if you have questions on the subject of Bible translations.

<sup>9</sup> **Appendix A** (Page 17) is a complete list of verses using cognates of repent/repentance in the OT. **Appendix B** (Page 21) is the same for the NT. These two are intended for documentation and research and could be considered a “boring” read. **Appendix C** (Page 25) is a word study analysis of 2 Cor. 7:8-11 in reference to repentance. It is much shorter and is intended to be read for general information on the use of repentance in the NT.

<sup>10</sup> Number of times “*shoob*” is translated as: ...return 391, ...again 248, turn 123, ...back 65, ...away 56, restore 39, bring 34, render 19, answer 18, recompense 8, recover 6, deliver 5, put 5, withdraw 5, requite 4, misc. 40; for a total of 1066 times.

often neglected in this discussion is that the word “*shoob*” is only translated as “repent” *three times*<sup>11</sup> out of over one thousand times that it is used. The other forty-three times that “repent” is found, it is translated from the other Hebrew word used; “*naw-kham'*,” which has a different meaning. This observation alone should cast some doubt on the unbiblical assumption that we must *turn* from sin or repent of sin in order to be saved. A second point that will be discussed later (See [Appendix A](#) - Page 17) is that out of the 46 times that repent is used in the OT, 37 times, or about 75% of the time *it is speaking of God repenting or not repenting*. Only about one-fourth of the time does it refer to man repenting. Of the six times that it refers to man repenting, *none* of the occurrences are in the context of acquiring eternal life. The fact that in most cases that it is God Himself repenting, should also indicate to us that the OT word does *not* mean to “turn from sin” or “be sorry for sin.”

The account in the book of Jonah about his ill-fated boat cruise and his exhortation to the Ninevites mentions repentance “נָחַם” (*naw-kham'*) three times (Jonah 3:9, 10: 4:2),<sup>12</sup> but all three times it is referring to *God Himself* repenting about not destroying the people of the city.

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Greek and Hebrew definitions in this paper are from the Online Bible Hebrew or Greek Lexicons unless otherwise noted.

<sup>11</sup> The three verses in which נָחַם (*shoob*) is translated “repent” are:

1 Kings 8:47 “Yet if they shall bethink (*shoob*) themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent (*shoob*) and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;”

Ezekial 14:6 “Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, (*shoob*) and turn (*shoob*) yourselves from your idols; and turn (*shoob*) away your faces from all your abominations.

Ezekiel 18:30 “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent (*shoob*) and turn (*shoob*) yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

Please note that in each of these verses, “*shoob*” occurs at least twice. Perhaps part of the reason that the translators translated “*shoob*” as “repent” once in each of the verses is the tendency for them to not repeat the same word in the same context for the sake of refined-sounding English. It would sound kind of awkward to translate “*shoob* and *shoob*” as “turn and turn.” This observation and the fact that the word is almost always translated as another English word with a different meaning implies to me that “repent” might not be the best translation for that Hebrew word. (*Shoob*) is also found in 12 of the OT “repent - (*naw-kham'*)” verses and is usually translated as “turn,” “return,” or similar). See [Appendix A](#) (Page 17).

This propensity to translate identical words differently in the same context has the potential to be misleading and can be found in other instances such as Matthew 16:25, 26: For whosoever will save his life (ψυχή - *psoo-khay'*) shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life (ψυχή - *psoo-khay'*) for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (ψυχή - *psoo-khay'*) or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (ψυχή - *psoo-khay'*).

<sup>12</sup> **God repented concerning the Ninevites (OT):**

Jonah 3:9. Who can tell if God will repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

Jonah 3:10. And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

Jonah 4:2. And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

**The Ninevites repented (NT):**

Matt. 12:41. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

In the NT Jesus tells us that the *men* of Ninevah also repented (Matt. 12:41). This word in the Greek is μετανοέω (*met-an-o-eh'-o*). This is the most common NT word for repent, and has as its basic meaning to be “a change of mind.” We will later see that it appears that some have put too much emphasis *just* on the etymology of the word while neglecting how the word is commonly used in the NT.

We have seen that the OT word for repent (here “נָחַם” - *naw-kham'*) does not mean “turn from sin” as we see God “repenting.” The Jonah account does not mention the Ninevites repenting but it does say that “...God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not (Jonah 3:10). There is no mention of the Ninevites repenting as God did by definition of the OT word, but we are told by Jesus that they did repent as defined by the NT word, μετανοέω (*met-an-o-eh'-o*).

What we have recorded in Jonah that the Ninevites *did* do was “that they turned (שׁוּב - *shoob*) from their evil way.” There is no mention here of receiving eternal life but it is clear that the result of their “repentance” (Jesus’ statement) i.e. “turning from their evil way” effected *temporal* deliverance in that they did not *physically* perish under God’s judgment.

If we stick with the etymology of the NT word and reconcile it with the context, we might say that the Ninevites “changed their mind about their pattern of sin, judged it and corrected it.” This alleviated God’s judgment on them for their ongoing sin. We will soon find that many of the other NT occurrences of repent/repentance are saying much the same thing in their contexts. “Turning from sin” is a commonly found exhortation in both the OT and the NT but in the OT it is only rarely expressed by the common word for “repent” (*naw-kham'*),<sup>13</sup> and much more frequently expressed by using the common word for “turn;” (*shoob*).<sup>14</sup>

Before other “grace” people get too upset over this statement about repentance frequently being connected with turning from sin, please realize that this does not nullify nor pollute the “grace” message for eternal salvation found throughout the Bible. Why not? We posit and believe that we can establish that the Bible nowhere teaches that a person *must* “repent” in order to receive eternal life.”<sup>15</sup> This statement might get *both* some “grace” people and “faith-plus-works for salvation” folks concerned but more on this shortly.

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<sup>13</sup>The only OT verses that I could find that both contained “repent” and that had to do with turning from sin are the following: 1 Kings 8:47; Job 42:6; Jer. 8:6; Jer. 31:19; Eze. 14:6; 18:30. The two passages in Ezekiel translated repent from *shoob*, which actually means “turn.” These are also the only two of the above which are imperative or commands. The other four verses using *naw-kham'* are in the indicative mood and are only stating the action as occurring.

<sup>14</sup> A passage that comes to mind which is representative of this is Ezekiel, chapter 18. The following verses have to do with exhortations to turn from sin or else receive temporal judgment. In each verse, “turn” or “return” is translated from “*shoob*.” Verses 21; 23; 24; 26;27;28; 30; 32. It is noteworthy that in these instances that the Septuagint (Also known as the LXX, the 3rd. century BC translation of the Hebrew OT into Koine Greek) translates the Hebrew “*shoob*” into Greek as a compound of “στρέφω - *stref'-o*” (meaning to turn or return) and not as “μετανοέω - *met-an-o-eh'-o*” (meaning a change of mind).

<sup>15</sup> This assertion should not be construed to say that there are no cases where a person “repented” or even sorrowed for or turned from some sins and then believed in Jesus for eternal life, just that repentance is not given in Scripture as a *requirement* for receiving eternal life; belief in Jesus is (John 3:16; 6:47; Acts 16:31; et al). E. g. A person can read the Bible and believe in Jesus, he can go to church, hear a good evangelistic sermon and believe in Jesus or engage in other circumstances before or even contributing toward believing in Jesus, but the *one* Biblical requirement is “believe in Jesus.” There will be more explanation on this in NT portion of this study.

## Summary of OT usage of “Repent”

1. “Repent” and its cognates are found 46 times in the Old Testament in 45 verses. Two Hebrew words are translated “repent” in the KJV. Neither Hebrew word that is translated “repent” in the OT is consistently translated as such; “נחם” (*naw-kham*) about 38% of the time and “שׁוּב” (*shoob*) less than  $\frac{3}{10}$  of 1% of the time. In other words, both Hebrew words translated as “repent” are more often translated otherwise. The two words each have different definitions<sup>16</sup> and the definition of neither of the two words coincides with the etymological meaning of the common NT word translated as “repent.” (See footnote 19). This all might indicate that “repent” possibly is not even the best translation in many cases.

2. The majority of the time (about 75%) it is God who repents or does not repent, indicating for certain that “repent” in the OT does not categorically mean to “turn from sin” or to “be sorry for sin.”

3. Nowhere in the OT is repentance associated with receiving eternal life. We therefore cannot establish from the OT that we must “repent of sins” or even “repent” in *any* way to be eternally saved.<sup>17</sup>

4. The theme of the need for God’s people to turn from sin is common in the OT but by using a different word from the word commonly translated “repent.” In the OT the theme of turning from sin is rarely mentioned in the context of “repentance”<sup>18</sup> and never as a requirement to

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<sup>16</sup> *Naw-kham* is translated as “comfort” or “comforter” 66 times. It also could have the sense of “regret,” whereas “*shoob*” means something similar to “turn” or “return,”

<sup>17</sup> Some might object to this assertion by suggesting that after Jonah finally got right with God, that the residents of Nineveh repented and were eternally saved. The phrase, “...Salvation is of the LORD” in Jonah 2:9, should not be construed as speaking of eternal life. The context refers to the saving of Jonah’s physical life and possibly also to an indirect reference to the potential physical salvation of the Ninevites if they repented. Of the 300-plus occurrences of “save” or “salvation” in the OT, almost all refer to some kind of temporal salvation such as saving the life, saving from pestilence, from enemies, etc. It is likely that there are instances that the word “Salvation” (ישועה - *yesh-oo’-aw*) also alludes to the proper noun of Yeshua, the Savior.

We propose that the message that God told Jonah to preach was *not* what we usually think of as the “gospel” message of believing in Jesus in order to receive eternal life. Let’s see if the text actually shows that he was to preach a city-wide turning from sin which would result in a temporal salvation; that the people of their city would not be physically destroyed. In 1:2, God told Jonah to go to Nineveh “...for their wickedness is come up before me.” After Jonah’s rebellion and encounter with the great fish, he arrived in Nineveh (3:3) and proclaimed the message that they had forty days until the city would be overthrown (3:4). The people believed the message and the king proclaimed a fast saying, “let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.” (3:8, “Turning from his evil way” is *not* the good news of salvation by grace through faith). The king then wonders, “Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?” (3:9). It is interesting that some who would teach that we have to “repent,” i.e. turn from sin, in order to be eternally saved, use this verse as a “proof” text. The verse is *not* speaking of a person turning from their sin for eternal life, but of God repenting of the tragic outcome that Nineveh would have experienced had they not believed the preacher.

In verse 10 we read, “And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.” (Underline added) We do not receive eternal life by our works or by turning from our evil way (Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5). This was obviously speaking of a physical destruction of the city as 4:11 speaks of God sparing Nineveh, both the human and bovine members. Cows are not candidates for eternal life.

Though we might speculate that there was also some message about faith in Yahweh or his coming Messiah for eternal life (cf. 1:14, 16), this is not the purpose of the text and it is not stated.

<sup>18</sup> This is found primarily in the two verses which translate (*shoob*) for repent. Please see Appendix A (Page 17).



receive eternal life. Unless we see Scripture which supersedes this, we are in grave danger of God's judgment (Gal. 1:6-10; Rev. 22:18) if we add to His simple plan of salvation found in both the OT and NT; that we only need to believe in Jesus the Messiah (Yeshua HaMeshiach) for eternal life (John 3:16. et al)

### **“Repentance” in the New Testament:**

Forms of the word “repent” or “repentance” are used in the New Testament 66 times in 60 verses. Please see the text and complete verse list in Appendix B (Page 21). The majority of the time it is translated from the Greek words *μετάνοια* (*met-an'-oy-ah*), noun, and *μετανοέω* (*met-an-o-eh'-o*), verb. It simply means “a change of mind.”<sup>19</sup> The *object* of the change of mind must be determined by the context. A person can repent or change his mind about sin, about going to the store today, or about *anything*. The *result* of the change of mind also is not in the meaning of the word. That must also be determined by the context. Sorrow or a changed life after repentance may or may not occur but *it is not in the meaning of the word itself*.<sup>20</sup> In contrast to the OT, the words used in the Greek NT for repent/repentance are consistently translated as such. Eight of the occurrences in the New Testament “repent” are translated from a form of the Greek word “μεταμέλλομαι (*met-am-el'-lom-ahee*)” and it can have a meaning of “caring afterwards, or “regret.”<sup>21</sup> (Appendix B - Page 21).

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<sup>19</sup>“Μετανοέω” (*met-an-o-eh'-o*) comes from two Greek words: “μετά” (*met-ah'*) with the accusative means “after” and “νοιέω” (*noy-eh'-o*) to “think” or “perceive.” from “νοῦς” (*nooce*) “the mind,” “intellect.” It can literally mean an “after-thought.”

<sup>20</sup> For example, the Corinthian believers were told in 2 Cor. 7:10, “For godly sorrow worketh repentance...” (*μετάνοια* - *met-an'-oy-ah*). Notice that it says that godly sorrow *works* repentance, not that godly sorrow *is* repentance, nor that godly sorrow is *necessary* for repentance. It also does not reverse the order and say that repentance works godly sorrow. This context is in reference to the believer's sanctification, not the unbeliever's eternal salvation. For more explanation on this passage and its context please see Appendix C (Page 25).

Another motivator for repentance is presented to the believers at Rome in Rom. 2:4, “...the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.”

<sup>21</sup> Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich's Greek-English Lexicon of the NT, defines “*metamellomai*” as “(feel) regret,” “repent, and in some places can it can also mean simply “change one's mind.”

The following verses translate “*metamellomai*” as repent. The most common Greek word translated as “repent” is a form of “*metanoia*.”

Matt. 21:29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

Matt. 21:32 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. 27:3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

2 Cor. 7:8 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.

Heb. 7:21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord swear and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)

In addition, the following verses using *μεταμέλλομαι*, (*metamellomai*), with a negative prefix

Rom. 11:29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. (αμεταμελομαι)

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



We have mentioned that repentance in the NT frequently has to do with changing the mind about a sinful pattern, judging, and correcting it (i.e. repenting of various sins).<sup>22</sup> There are at least 3 specific groups of people who are recipients of this exhortation; national Israel, unbelievers in general, and believers of this age.

### **Example of Repentance and National Israel:**

Mark 1:14, 15. “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, (μετανοέω - *met-an-o-eh'-o*) and believe the gospel.”<sup>23</sup>

Though some use this verse in an attempt to show a person how to be eternally saved, this context is obviously an exhortation to Israel and is speaking of the *gospel of the kingdom of God*; i.e. the promised millennial reign of Messiah on the earth. We cannot accurately assume that whenever we see the word “gospel” that it always is referring to that which one must believe or do in order to receive eternal life.

In some instances the gospel is the good news about believing in Jesus for everlasting life and in some other places it is different such as some other kind of good news about Jesus (e.g. Luke 2:9, 10, where the angels brought “good tidings” to the shepherds about Jesus’ birth). Please read the article “The Gospel Is More Than 'Faith Alone In Christ Alone” by Jeremy Myers, found at <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/2006ii/03%20Myers%20-%20Gospel.pdf>. A number of other Biblical uses of “gospel” are documented there.

The King was rejected and the earthly kingdom has now been postponed. This is not the same message to us about believing in Jesus for eternal life. If we were to force this statement to be an eternal salvation message for us today; not only would it be out of context, but it would be the *only* verse telling us to repent *and* believe in order to be eternally saved (i.e. *two* conditions instead of one). Surprisingly to some, it would also be the *only* verse that tells us to believe the “gospel” in order to receive eternal life. We are repeatedly told to believe in *Jesus* for eternal life

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<sup>22</sup> One example that does *not* fit with the frequently found implication that the NT exhortation to repent effectively means to change the mind and turn from sin is found in Heb. 12:17, “For ye know how that afterward, when he [Esau] would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance (*metanoia*), though he sought it carefully with tears.” What was it that Esau could not find? It was not a turning from sinful behavior. It was not penance. What he could not find was a way to change his father's mind. The matter was settled. No matter how much he pleaded, he couldn't change Isaac's mind.

<sup>23</sup> Some of the newer translations do not mention “the kingdom” in verse 14. This is due to a textual variation and that most of the modern translations are now using the Critical Text as their basis for translating the NT.

τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ - “The gospel of the kingdom of the God.” This reading is found in one of the three major western (i.e. Egyptian) manuscripts (Codex Alexandrinus) used to compile the Westcott & Hort Critical text (1881) and also in the vast majority of Byzantine manuscripts including fragments (hundreds). This is the manuscript family from which the Textus Receptus was derived. This includes KJV, NKJV and several others.

τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ “The gospel of the God.” This reading is found in two of the three major western manuscripts (Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) used to compile the Westcott & Hort Critical text along with several fragments.

Scholars are divided concerning which is the most reliable text; This writer is of the persuasion that in most cases of variance that the Byzantine or Majority Text family is more reliable. (These variations are mostly minor and do not affect doctrine) There are a number of reasons for this but just one of them is the fact that part of the criteria for developing the Critical Text was to almost always adopt the *shorter* of available renderings. This resulted in a text of about 4,000 Greek words less than the Majority Text, which is almost numerically equivalent to removing Galatians, Jude, and 2 John. It is called the Majority Text due to the fact that there are presently over 6,000 significant portions known to exist.

(John 3:16; 6:47; Acts 16:31, et al). There are over 150 Bible references which state that the *one* requirement for receiving everlasting life is by faith/belief alone. (For list, see footnote #36 of the study found at <http://www.freegraceresources.org/galindex.html>). There is no exhortation here to believe in Jesus nor any reference to receiving eternal life/justification.

It appears that Matt. 12, (the attributing of Messiah's work to Satan) was the turning point for the immediate reception of the earthly kingdom for the Jews. Since the kingdom was now to be postponed, Jesus then began to prepare His disciples for the coming "church" age. He initiated His pattern of teaching in parables;<sup>24</sup> the first one (the sower and the four soils) showing them what responses to expect when they were to sow the Word during this time.

A couple of facts that are unique to this verse are: This is the only NT verse that tells someone to "repent" *and* "believe" the gospel or even to "repent" and "believe" *anything*.<sup>25</sup> Another important fact to note is that after looking up all 132 occurrences of both the noun form and verb form of "gospel" (εὐαγγέλιον - *yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on* / εὐαγγελίζω - *yoo-ang-ghel-id'-zo*), I was able to find only *one* instance where someone was told to *believe* the gospel: That is Mark 1:15; the verse under discussion. The issue in being eternally saved is not necessarily believing the *gospel*, as that content differs in various contexts, but the issue is believing in Jesus to save us (John 3:16; 6:47; Acts 16:31, et al).

The Jews were also told to do works "meet for repentance" (Matt. 3:8). This was later also for the Gentiles (Acts 26:20). They were apparently being told to bring forth fruit "fit for, suitable for, or worthy of repentance."

There is much more to research on the topic of Israel and repentance during the age of the Law but for an attempt at brevity and due to the lesser relevance of this to us today, we will proceed to the second-mentioned recipients of the repentance exhortations.

### **Examples of Repentance and Unbelievers in General:**

In Rev. 9:20, 21 and 16:9, 11, we find examples of God's temporal judgment upon the *unbeliever* for not forsaking mentioned patterns of sin. This again is not in the context of believing in Jesus and receiving eternal life. This also is referring to what will occur during the Great Tribulation period. We believe that a general maxim is that anyone, saved or unsaved, who turns from some of their sins will benefit from that action; it just will not merit them eternal life.

2 Pet. 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Though some assume that this is referring to repentance for eternal life, the context does not support that interpretation. The context is in reference to "the last days" (v.3) prior to the "day of the Lord. (v. 10). This verse shares a similarity to Jonah's message to Ninevah in that it is a warning concerning ongoing sin causing physical death. "Perish" here is the same Greek word as

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<sup>24</sup> Some might be surprised as to *why* Jesus then began to speak in parables; See Matt. 13:10-13; basically so that the disciples would understand and the willful unbelievers would not. Perhaps this was a gracious act toward them so that those who chose not to believe Him would not have even greater accountability.

<sup>25</sup> There are only three verses in the NT which have cognates of "believe" and "repent" in the same verse: Matt. 21:32; Mark 1:15; Acts 19:5. None of the 3 tell us to do the two to receive eternal life

in verse 6, (ἀπόλλομι - *ap-ol'-loo-mee*) which is clearly speaking of people physically dying. The Greek word seldom has to do with eternal condemnation.<sup>26</sup>

Repentance is also commanded to a crowd of unknown spiritual status in order for them to avoid God's *temporal* judgment. For example, a pair of often misused verses is Luke 13:3, 5; "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."<sup>27</sup> These verses are often quoted in an attempt to support the false assertion that a person needs to "turn from sin" in order to be eternally saved (with the assumption that "perish" means to be eternally lost or hell-bound). The word "likewise" should tell us something about the meaning of the exhortation. Both verses refer in the context to those who experienced sudden and calamitous physical deaths. Verse four implies that this exhortation is addressed to them because of their ungodly *attitude* about their own sin. They were "thinking" wrongly and needed a change of mind (repentance) and by implication, a change in their actions. This result of prophecy was most likely fulfilled during the siege of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 AD (cf. verses 34, 35). According to Josephus, around 1,100,000 Jews died during this Roman siege. Please note also, that the *one* requirement for eternal justification given over 150 times in the NT; belief in Jesus, is *not* mentioned once in this passage. It is *not* a passage telling us how to be eternally saved.

Some would add to this category Luke 15:7, 10, which speaks that "...joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." If taken in context it is apparently speaking about straying *believers* repenting. It has nothing to do with an unsaved person becoming justified in God's sight just as the "prodigal" son later in the same chapter who remained a son, though a disobedient and straying one, until he repented and judged his sin. (Please see 3-part study referred to at the end of footnote 4).

### **Examples of Repentance and Believers of this Age:**

Even though the terms "repent/repentance of sin" are not to be found in the Word, the *concept* of repentance of sin is found, but never as a requirement for receiving eternal life. This teaching is of great relevance to us as believers today. Please see much more on this important doctrine in the 3-part study mentioned in footnote 4. Those mentioned in the following verses were already eternally saved but needed repentance due to some particular sins:

In Acts, chapter 8, we see the account of Philip preaching Christ to the Samaritans (v. 5). Many believed along with Simon the Sorcerer (11-13). Peter and John later arrived from Jerusalem and "...prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:"

When Simon saw the miraculous signs that they performed, he offered to pay money for the ability to display the same powers (13-19). Peter rebukes him for that sin and in verse 22 commands him to "...Repent therefore of this thy wickedness." Peter's further rebuke was to pray for *forgiveness*; a fellowship issue, not a justification issue. Simon was already a believer (vs. 8-11), but a disobedient one who needed correction.

In 2 Corinthians 7:8-10, Paul rejoices that some of the Corinthian believers "sorrowed to repentance" concerning the carnal lifestyle that they were embracing (Perhaps partially referring to the unholy alliances that some were forming as mentioned in the previous chapter). For more on this passage please see Appendix C (Page 25).

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<sup>26</sup> Please see the study at <http://www.freegraceresources.org/likewiseperish.html> where this Greek word is discussed and documented. "Perish" (ἀπόλλομι - *ap-ol'-loo-mee*) is used for eternal judgment only about 10% of the time that it is found.

<sup>27</sup> Please see footnote 26 above which also is a study on Luke 13:3, 5.

In 2 Cor. 12:21, Paul here speaks of his imminent arrival in Corinth and laments his anticipated finding of, “...many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.”

In Rev. 2 and 3, John exhorts believers in 5 of the 7 churches mentioned to repent of some specific areas in which they were lacking.<sup>28</sup> Two of the churches were commended and did not need the exhortation to repent.

### **Summary of NT usage of “Repent”**

Forms of the word “repent” or “repentance” are used in the New Testament 66 times in 60 verses. The majority of the time it is translated from the Greek words *μετάνοια* (*met-an'-oy-ah*), noun, and *μετανοέω* (*met-an-o-eh'-o*), verb. It simply means “a change of mind.” Eight of the occurrences in the New Testament “repent” are translated from a form of the Greek word “μεταμέλλομαι (*met-am-el'-lom-ahee*)” and it can have a meaning of “caring afterwards, or “regret.” In contrast to the OT words for repentance, these two words are always translated as some form of the word “repent.”

Neither the *object* of the change of mind nor the *result* of the change of mind are in the meaning of the word. Those must be determined by the context.

We are not told in the Bible to repent in order to be eternally saved. We are told to believe in Jesus.

Most of the NT meaning of repentance is summarized by Jesus’ assessment of the Ninevites who repented after Jonah’s teaching; they turned from their evil way and escaped some sort of temporal judgment. (Matt. 12:41; cf. Jonah 3:12).

Application to those who are saved by grace through faith: When we sin we are exhorted to confess our sins for forgiveness, cleansing, and restoration to fellowship (1 John 1:9) When this is neglected we need repentance.

### **Some Practical Considerations:**

Many times the unsaved person is exhorted by well-meaning pastors and Bible teachers to “repent of their sins and believe in Jesus in order to receive eternal life. This message is so widespread that some tend to assume that it is in the Bible. As mentioned earlier, the terms “repent of sin” or “repentance of sin” are not even to be found in God's word.

When a person hears that he must “repent of sin” in order to be eternally saved, he usually thinks that he must give up his sin in some vague manner or at least be sorry enough to be willing to attempt to reduce his sinning to some degree. Even though there would be great practical benefit to anyone forsaking some sins, logically speaking, this message takes a person who is already blinded by Satan (2 Cor. 4:3,4) and thrusts him into an endless sea of subjectivity. How much sin must be eliminated and for how long? What if he succeeds today in some area of sin but fails tomorrow? Does he lose his salvation? Should he just be concerned about the “popular” sins; the ones that legalistic people judge others for but that God does not mention as sins (e.g. smoking, drinking, dancing, certain clothing, etc.) and ignore those which God *does* mention such as pride, gossip, etc.? Just how good does he have to be to enter Heaven? The answer to that is that he must be “perfect” (Rev. 21:27, 2 Cor. 5:21). That can only occur when

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<sup>28</sup> Revelation 2:5(2 x); 2:16; 2:21(x2); 2:22; 3:3; 3:19.

we have Jesus' righteousness imputed to us by faith alone. (2 Cor. 5:21). Repentance is *not* presented in the Word of God as being a requirement for eternal life; belief in Jesus is.

Many who proclaim the message of “repent of sin and believe in Jesus” as a requirement for eternal life legitimately lament the sad state of the average believer and even the general condition of the body of Christ today. With some, the rationale seems to be that since believers are living such a carnal lifestyle, that we need to make it “hard” to get saved; that they need to have some level of obedience to Jesus before they even receive the gift of eternal life. If we have to earn it, it no longer is a gift (cf. Rom. 6:23).

There are those who would require a believer to “turn from sin” in order to be saved. This is sometimes called “*front-loading*” the gospel. Others would require that a person must show a certain pattern of good works after they believe or they either would lose their eternal life or prove that they were never saved at all. This is sometimes called *back-loading* the gospel. If we could lose *eternal* life, then God has misnamed it.

In either case, the requirement is made that we must do something of ourselves to add to Christ's perfect payment that He made on the cross for us. Isaiah 64:6 tells us that “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” If we require some level of Christian growth *before* a person is born again, we also negate the process of Christian growth that God commands in the believer's life. Though the intent of this spurious message might be admirable, we cannot properly correct error by teaching more error.<sup>29</sup>

Jesus said, speaking of His Holy Spirit which was to come, that He would “...reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me;...” (John 16:8, 9). He did not say that the Holy Spirit would convict the world of not repenting of their sins (plural), but that He would convict them of *the sin of unbelief*. (Italics added) Should not this make a vital impact upon our Gospel presentation? How often do we hear a false but well-intentioned faith-plus-works message proclaimed?

The stated purpose of the Gospel of John is that people would believe and have life through His name (John 20:31). John does not mention the word “repent” anywhere in the book of John. Therefore, I conclude that John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, does not think that repentance is necessary for someone to believe and have life.<sup>30</sup> If repentance or anything other than belief in Jesus was required in order to receive eternal life, then Jesus certainly mislead Nicodemus, the woman at the well, etc.

After checking all 112 occurrences of “repent” and “repentance, I also am unable to find any OT or NT verse which requires repentance for the receiving of eternal life. Repentance, sorrow for sin, gratefulness, or even a drastically changed lifestyle, etc. may or may not accompany the circumstances of someone believing in Jesus but only belief is stated as *the* requirement. Please see “Repentance” study at [www.faithalone.org/bookstore/ten-sample.pdf](http://www.faithalone.org/bookstore/ten-sample.pdf) for explanations for verses that are sometimes used to attempt to establish that we must repent in order to be justified and receive eternal life.

There are verses which refer both to repentance and “forgiveness” or “remission” of sins (frequently the same Greek word - ἄφεσις - *af'-es-is*). Forgiveness and justification are two

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<sup>29</sup> It has been said that, “Two wrongs don’t make a right, but that three rights *do* make a left.” ©

<sup>30</sup> John was familiar with both the word and the doctrine of repentance as he used it 12 times in the Revelation. It was used only where it was needed.

different issues. It appears that the Jews of Palestine during the ministry of John the Baptist who nationally had a part in rejecting and crucifying Jesus had some different requirements for forgiveness and even receiving the Holy Spirit, (Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38; 3:19, compared with the Gentile, Cornelius, in Acts 10).<sup>31</sup> The Jew of that locale and time, just as anyone in any age was still *justified* by faith alone as was Abraham two millennia before (Gen. 15:6). Along with the above-mentioned fact that the book of John does not even mention the word “repent,” it is also noteworthy that he only mentions “forgiveness” of sins in one verse; John 20:23. (NKJV, KJV translates the word as “remit,” (ἀφίημι - *af-ee'-ay-mee*), the most common Greek word translated “forgive”). This occurrence is not in reference to the eternal salvation message.

It appears that most of today’s evangelical Bible teachers maintain that “repentance” is a necessary component required in order to receive eternal life. Usually most of these would include belief in Jesus also.

I categorize these into two distinct groups: 1, Those who add man’s works to salvation by requiring some sort of works or change of life for salvation, and 2. Those who maintain the truth of the grace message which is explained in Romans and defended in Galatians. Let me explain.

The numerically largest of these two groups are those who teach that one must repent, or repent of sin to be saved, and by that meaning (or clearly stating) that one must turn from either all or some vague amount of sin, promise to turn from some sin, or at least be sufficiently sorry for their sin that they will forsake it, etc. in order to receive eternal life.

We offer two basic reasons for rejecting this message that we have to turn from sin or promise to turn from sin to be eternally saved: 1. The Bible does *not* tell us to either repent or to turn from sin to be eternally saved, and 2. The Bible repeatedly *does* tell us the one and only way that we can be saved is to believe in Jesus to save us. In reality, when we believe in Jesus as our Savior, we then have the Holy Spirit’s power in our life to overcome sin.

There is no need for an in-depth study of repentance in order to refute this doctrine. There are over 150 verses<sup>32</sup> which tell us that the means for us to obtain eternal life is by belief/faith. If we pollute this grace gospel in any way by adding man’s imperfect work to God’s finished work for our salvation, we are bringing God’s judgment upon us (Gal. 1:6-10). It would be difficult to make the eternal salvation message any more clear than that of John 3:16; 6:47; Acts 16:31; Eph. 2:8, 9, et al.

The numerically smaller of these two groups are those who state that we must repent to be saved and do so while still maintaining the “grace” message. They do not define repentance as turning from sin, but as a change of mind about Jesus and then believing in Him as Savior.

The logic is that since “repent” means to change the mind, that if you were trusting in your good works, church membership, water baptism, or whatever, in order to be eternally saved, then if you “changed your mind” and believed in Jesus that you would be saved; i.e. you already repented. Therefore, they say that either repentance is synonymous with belief<sup>33</sup> or that if you changed your mind from believing a false message to the true belief (in Jesus) then you have

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<sup>31</sup> These verses are ably covered in the book recommended at the end of footnote 4.

<sup>32</sup> For a list of these please see <http://www.freegraceresources.org/galindex.html>, footnote 36 of the Galatians study.

<sup>33</sup> Repentance and faith are *not* synonymous and they are only found together in 4 verses. None of these verses are in an evangelistic context. Please see “Repentance and Faith in the New Testament” By Bill Fiess, at [http://www.faithalone.org/magazine/y2014/BillFiess\\_RepentanceFaithNT.pdf](http://www.faithalone.org/magazine/y2014/BillFiess_RepentanceFaithNT.pdf)



already repented and it is not necessary to even mention it. One Bible teacher puts it as, “Repentance for salvation refers to a change of mind from man’s way of salvation to acceptance of God’s way of salvation.”

There are Bible teachers who are smarter and more knowledgeable than me who endorse that teaching<sup>34</sup> but I do not think that this logic is sufficient when compared with Scripture. A basic Scriptural argument is that of all the 112 references to repent and its cognates in the Bible that I can find *no statement made to the effect that we must repent in order to be justified, i.e. eternally saved*. If this is so, then we are on “very thin ice” claiming that repentance is also required when the Bible never states that it *is* required and is extremely clear that we simply need to believe in Jesus to save us. Jesus is not just *necessary* for our salvation, He is *sufficient* for our salvation.

One respected Bible teacher who is a proponent of this teaching agreed with me that there is no verse which tells us that we must repent to be saved<sup>35</sup> but was still adamant that we must repent (i.e. change our mind about Jesus or about how we are saved) in order to believe and be eternally saved. He was apparently basing his belief largely on the logic that if we believe in Jesus then we have already “changed our mind” from whatever we were believing in; therefore we need to have “repented,” i.e. had a change of mind.

I countered with the logic that even though that was likely to be true in many instances, it still is not necessarily a requirement because the Bible does not say so and logically, it is feasible that some may have never even believed in *anything* to be saved, but then through the Holy Spirit’s conviction they came to a *realization* of the truth and believed.

Let me illustrate. (An illustration does not *prove* doctrine; it seeks to illustrate and clarify doctrine). Suppose that you and I were in a room in a large building and I told you that the next room was fully engulfed in flames. Would you believe me? Your answer would likely depend upon several factors; Do you have any other related input? Do I have a sufficient pattern of trustworthiness with you? Are you having a bad day? etc. Now suppose that you open the door and immediately were almost overcome with the heat and the flames, it would matter little whether or not you believed me before as it would be almost impossible for you to doubt the truth of my warning then.

Now, more directly related to this matter, suppose you were in the same room in the same situation except that I was not there to warn you. You might not have been thinking about anything, especially about the condition of the next room or what I might have told you if I had been there; You open the door and immediately are almost overcome with heat and flames; Now what?

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<sup>34</sup> Even though we propose that this teaching is in error (i.e. that we must repent to be saved, repent in the Bible means to change your mind and believe in Jesus for eternal life) we can certainly fellowship with those of that persuasion. This teaching does not pollute the grace message as mentioned in Gal. 1:6-10. I cannot be too critical of those who teach this as I did so for many years.

<sup>35</sup> Another respected Bible teacher, though he was a proponent of “repent/change of mind and believe in Jesus” view, honestly admits that there is no Biblical support that repentance is required for receiving eternal life. See L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), III: 373-78. “From this overwhelming mass of irrefutable evidence [the absence of repentance in John, only one occurrence in Romans, its absence in Paul’s reply of Acts 16:31], it is clear that the New Testament does not impose repentance upon the unsaved as a condition of salvation” (p. 376).



Did you change your mind about the condition of the next room? Of course not. You were not even thinking about it. You encountered a very convincing *realization*. You had not believed anything either way about the condition of the next room until you opened the door.

Could a similar circumstance manifest itself in the spiritual realm? I know of someone whose personal salvation testimony is claimed to match this scenario. Neither this hypothetical logic nor this person's testimony is proof. The proof needs to come from the God's Word. To me, the proof is that God's Word nowhere tells us to repent or to turn from our sin in order to be justified/receive eternal life, but He does tell us repeatedly to just believe/have faith in Jesus to be eternally saved.

### **Conclusion and Summary**

All this controversy about the purity and clarity of the gospel of eternal salvation may seem to be "nit-picking," but I am pleading for the lost person who has been blinded by a faith-plus-works salvation message just as I had been for years. I intend for this study to be a declaration of the importance of getting the accurate Biblical saving message to the lost in a clear and understandable manner. So many are religious and sincere but have not believed in Jesus in order to have eternal life. The misuse of repentance is only one of many issues that Satan uses to blind the lost. He is content for people to do good works and try hard as long as they do not believe in Jesus for eternal life, or even if they believe in Jesus *plus* something else. Satan's ministers are sometimes "ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:3-4; 13-15). This passage tells me that we can sometimes find Satan's ministers in church pulpits, and that they are teaching *man's* righteousness, not Jesus' finished and perfect work.

"Repent and believe"<sup>36</sup> or "turn from your sins and believe" is a commonly heard "gospel" message today. It is confusing as the unbeliever does not quite know how much of his own goodness is required. Many have repeatedly tried and failed, then finally "threw out the baby with the bathwater." I have shared the John 3:16 message to many who had already wisely rejected the false message and then when they realized that salvation was by grace through faith, they believed in Jesus and received the gift of eternal life. *Some* of these have gone on into obedient living but all who believed in Jesus will live eternally with Him. This erroneous message confuses the unsaved and hinders reproduction of the believer. It is contrary to God's word.

The message of Acts 16:31, is "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." If we must do more of ourselves in order to merit our eternal life, we must discard this verse and many more which state that belief/faith in Jesus is the means for us to receive eternal life. Repentance does not necessarily enter into the event of a person believing in Jesus and being saved, but it is an important doctrine to apply when a believer becomes involved in a pattern of unconfessed and unjudged sin.

May we consistently speak the good news of eternal salvation to the lost in a clear, accurate, and loving manner. This is one good way to partially fulfill the mandate of Matthew 28:19, 20, and to glorify Jesus by bearing much fruit (John 15:8).

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<sup>36</sup>The only Bible verse which uses the term "repent and believe" is Mark 1:15. The context is the exhortation to believe the "gospel of the kingdom." This was a message to national Israel and it had to do with the earthly kingdom offered to them and not to eternal life. The Jews wanted the Kingdom but the leaders rejected their King. For more on this verse please see footnote 23 and the associated text.

This study is not meant to be the “last word” on this topic as we all have much to learn of God’s holy word. It is likely that this study will be revised and added to in the future. We have concentrated largely on the word-study aspect of the teaching as we consider it fundamental and it has frequently been somewhat neglected in other studies. For more on the subject which is not covered here, again we recommend some of the Bible studies at the websites mentioned in the text and footnotes; especially the study at [www.faithalone.org/bookstore/ten-sample.pdf](http://www.faithalone.org/bookstore/ten-sample.pdf) and the 3-part study mentioned at the end of footnote 4.

## **Appendix A - Text of All Occurrences of “Repent,” “Repentance,” etc. in the OT**

All OT verses in the KJV using “repent” in two lists separated by whether it is God who repents or man who repents:

### **OT Verses Where God is the One Who Repents**

37 Occurrences

Gen. 6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

Gen. 6:7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

Ex. 32:12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. (*Note: “Evil” here and in similar contexts is referring to adversity, affliction, or calamity, not to sinfulness.*)

Ex. 32:14 And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

Num. 23:19 God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Deut. 32:36 For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.

Jud. 2:18 And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.

1 Sam. 15:11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

1 Sam. 15:29 And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.

1 Sam. 15:35 And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

2 Sam. 24:16 And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.

1 Chron. 21:15 And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is

enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

Ps. 90:13 Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

Ps. 106:45 And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.

Ps. 110:4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Ps. 135:14 For the LORD will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants.

Jer. 4:28 For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it.

Jer. 15:6 Thou hast forsaken me, saith the LORD, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary with repenting.

Jer. 18:8 If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

Jer. 18:10 If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.

Jer. 20:16 And let that man be as the cities which the LORD overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide;

Jer. 26:3 If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings.

Jer. 26:13 Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

Jer. 26:19 Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the LORD, and besought the LORD, and the LORD repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls.

Jer. 42:10 If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you.

Eze. 24:14 I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD.

Hos. 11:8 How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

Hos. 13:14 I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

Joe 2:13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

Joel 2:14 Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?

Amos 7:3 The LORD repented for this: It shall not be, saith the LORD.

Amos 7:6 The LORD repented for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord GOD.

Jonah 3:9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

Jonah 3:10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

Jonah 4:2 And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

Zech. 8:14 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not:

### OT Verses Where Man is the One Who Repents

9 Occurrences

Ex. 13:17 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt:

Jud. 21:6 And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day.

Jud. 21:15 And the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Israel.

1 Ki 8:47 Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, (שׁוּב - *shoob*) and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;

Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Jer. 8:6 I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.

Jer. 31:19 Surely after that I was turned (שׁוּב - *shoob*), I repented (נָחַם - *naw-kham*); and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.

Eze. 14:6 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent (שׁוּב - *shoob*), and turn (שׁוּב - *shoob*), yourselves from your idols; and turn (שׁוּב - *shoob*) away your faces from all your abominations.

Eze. 18:30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, (שׁוּב - *shoob*) and turn (שׁוּב - *shoob*) yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

### Of the verse list above, those which translate שׁוּב (*shoob*) as “repent.”

1 Kings 8:47 Yet if they shall bethink themselves (שׁוּב - *shoob*) in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, (שׁוּב - *shoob*) and make supplication unto thee in the land of them

that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;

Eze. 14:6 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent (שוב - *shoob*) and turn (שוב - *shoob*) yourselves from your idols; and turn away (שוב - *shoob*) your faces from all your abominations.

Eze. 18:30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent (שוב - *shoob*) and turn (שוב - *shoob*) yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

**Of the verse list above, those that use “repent” and שׁוּב - (*shoob*)**

Ex. 13:17 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not *through* the way of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent [נחם - *naw-kham'*] when they see war, and they return [שוב - *shoob*] to Egypt:

Ex. 32:12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn [שוב - *shoob*] from thy fierce wrath, and repent [נחם - *naw-kham'*] of this evil against thy people.

1 Kings 8:47 *Yet* if they shall bethink themselves [שוב - *shoob*] in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, [שוב - *shoob*] and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;

Ps. 90:13 Return, [שוב - *shoob*] O LORD, how long? and let it repent [נחם - *naw-kham'*] thee concerning thy servants.

Jer. 4:28 For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken *it*, I have purposed *it*, and will not repent, [נחם - *naw-kham'*] neither will I turn back [שוב - *shoob*] from it.

Jer. 18:8 If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn [שוב - *shoob*] from their evil, I will repent [נחם - *naw-kham'*] of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

Jer. 26:3 If so be they will hearken, and turn [שוב - *shoob*] every man from his evil way, that I may repent [נחם - *naw-kham'*] me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings.

Jer. 42:10 If ye will still abide [שוב - *shoob*] in this land, then will I build you, and not pull *you* down, and I will plant you, and not pluck *you* up: for I repent [נחם - *naw-kham'*] me of the evil that I have done unto you.

Eze. 14:6 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, [שוב - *shoob*] and turn [שוב - *shoob*] yourselves from your idols; and turn away [שוב - *shoob*] your faces from all your abominations.

Eze. 18:30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, [שוב - *shoob*] and turn [שוב - *shoob*] yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

Joel 2:14 Who knoweth *if* he will return [שוב - *shoob*] and repent, [נחם - *naw-kham'*] and leave a blessing behind him; *even* a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?

Jon. 3:9 Who can tell *if* God will turn [שׁוּב - *shoob*] and repent, [נָחַם - *naw-kham*] and turn away [שׁוּב - *shoob*] from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

**Appendix B - Text of All Occurrences of “Repent,” “Repentance,” etc. in the NT  
Used 66 times in 60 Verses in the KJV**

(μετανοέω - *met-an-o-eh'-o* - verb)/(μετάνοια - *met-an'-oy-ah* - noun) “a change of mind” is the Greek word in all the following verses except the 8 places in 7 verses noted with boldface addresses which are forms of μεταμέλλομαι (*met-am-el'-lom-ahee*) “to care afterwards; regret.”

Matt. 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matt. 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

Matt. 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:

Matt. 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matt. 9:13 But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Matt. 11:20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

Matt. 11:21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Matt. 12:41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.

**Matt. 21:29** He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, (μεταμέλλομαι - *met-am-el'-lom-ahee*) and went.

**Matt. 21:32** 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 (μεταμέλλομαι - *met-am-el'-lom-ahee*) not afterward, that ye might believe him.

**Matt. 27:3** Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented (μεταμέλλομαι - *met-am-el'-lom-ahee*) himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

Mark 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Mark 2:17 When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Mark 6:12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

Luke 3:3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

Luke 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Luke 5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Luke 10:13 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

Luke 11:32 The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.

Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Luke 13:5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Luke 15:10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Lu 16:30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

Luke 17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

Luke 17:4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

Luke 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Acts 5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Acts 8:22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Acts 13:24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Acts 19:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.



Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 26:20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

Rom. 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

**Rom. 11:29** For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance. (μεταμέλλομαι - met-am-el'-lom-ahee, with negative prefix).

**2 Cor. 7:8** For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, (μεταμέλλομαι - met-am-el'-lom-ahee) though I did repent: (μεταμέλλομαι - met-am-el'-lom-ahee) for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season.

2 Cor. 7:9 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.

**2 Cor. 7:10** For godly sorrow worketh repentance (μετάνοια - met-an'-oy-ah) to salvation not to be repented (μεταμέλλομαι - met-am-el'-lom-ahee, with negative prefix) of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

2 Cor. 12:21 *And* lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

2 Tim. 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

Heb. 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

Heb. 6:6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.

**Heb. 7:21** (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, (μεταμέλλομαι - met-am-el'-lom-ahee) Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)

Heb. 12:17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

2 Pet. 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Rev. 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Rev. 2:16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Rev. 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

Rev. 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

Rev. 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Rev. 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Rev. 9:20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

Rev. 9:21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

Rev. 16:9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

Rev. 16:11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

### **New Testament verses which use Repent or Repentance and also the word “sin” or “sinner.”**

Mt 9:13 But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Mr 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

Mr 2:17 When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Lu 3:3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

Lu 5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Lu 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Lu 15:10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Lu 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Ac 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Ac 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Ac 5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

2Co 12:21 *And* lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

The above verses are the only ones that I could find that combined repentance and sin or sinner in the same verse. None of them tell us to repent of our sin in order to be eternally saved. Some of these verses demand a satisfactory explanation. To this end I recommend the book mentioned at the end of footnote 4.

### Appendix C - Repentance in 2 Cor. 7:8-11

**A word study analysis of 2 Cor. 7:8-11 in reference to repentance** - pertinent Greek words with Strong's number's and definitions and number of uses in this passage.

3076 λυπέω - *loo-peh'-o* - To distress, To make sorrowful (verbs used here 6x)

3077 λύπη - *loo'-pay* - - Sorrow - noun; root of verb 3076 (noun used here 2x)

3341 μετάνοια - *met-an'-oy-ah* - A change of mind (noun used here 2x)

3338 μεταμέλλομαι - *met-am-el'-lom-ahee* - To care afterwards; regret. This word is rarely used for "repent." (verb is used here 2x)

278 ἀμεταμέλητος - *am-et-am-el'-ay-tos* - negative form of 3338 (used here 1x)

8 For though I made you sorry (λυπέω - *loo-peh'-o*) with a letter, I do not repent (μεταμέλλομαι - *met-am-el'-lom-ahee*), though I did repent (μεταμέλλομαι - *met-am-el'-lom-ahee*): for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry (λυπέω - *loo-peh'-o*), though it were but for a season.

9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry (λυπέω - *loo-peh'-o*), but that ye sorrowed (λυπέω - *loo-peh'-o*) to repentance (μετάνοια - *met-an'-oy-ah*): for ye were made sorry (λυπέω - *loo-peh'-o*) after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

10 For godly sorrow (λύπη - *loo'-pay*) worketh repentance (μετάνοια - *met-an'-oy-ah*) to salvation not to be repented of (ἀμεταμελητος): but the sorrow (λύπη - *loo'-pay*) of the world worketh death.

11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed (λυπέω - *loo-peh'-o*) 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.

We cannot necessarily assume that the "salvation" mentioned in verse 10 is referring to eternal life. These people were already eternally saved; they needed sanctification salvation. There is no mention of the *one* requirement for eternal salvation; belief in Jesus. They, as believers, had a sin problem that needed to be rectified. Many of the save/salvation references in the NT refer to some sort of temporal salvation, not to eternal life.<sup>37</sup> For more on this passage please see footnote 20.

Paul rejoiced, not that they had been distressed, but that they had been distressed to the extent that they repented of their sinful pattern of life (the unequal yokes of 6:14; i.e. unholy associations, et al). They experienced godly sorrow which worked repentance in their lives. They were already eternally saved by belief in Jesus but needed to correct the lack in their Christian service. Paul rejoiced in this.

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<sup>37</sup> For example: Matt:8:24, 25; 14:30; Luke 1:71; Acts 27:31; Php. 1:19; 1 Tim. 2:15; 4:16; et al. Almost all OT occurrences refer to some sort of temporal salvation such as salvation from calamity, enemies, etc.

“The Grace New Testament Commentary” sums it up well:  
“Paul is writing of the repentance of people already born again. *Salvation* here refers to deliverance from the deadly consequences of unrepentant sin, not only in this life, but also before the Judgment Seat of Christ (cf. Luke 15:11–24).”