



SATAN EXPOSED

How the devil has added **works** to the plan of **salvation**.

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Introduction

The Bible clearly teaches that repentance is absolutely necessary in order to receive the free gift of salvation. (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30; Acts 20:21; Acts 26:20) Since God requires repentance for salvation, and if men are to know they have eternal life (1 John 5:13 says “...that ye may know that ye have eternal life...”), it is essential to have the correct definition and proper understanding of **Biblical** repentance. Ultimately, the purpose of this study is to get a **Biblical** answer to the question: “...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30)

While much literature has been published on the subject of repentance, nearly all of it that I have read falls short of the truth contained in the Bible’s 112 uses of the word “repent.” Most authors have a distorted view and wrest the scriptures to prop up their personal biases and historic positions. The **Appendix** identifies all 112 uses of the various forms of the word “repent,” each with comments showing how the word is used in its context. These verses clearly show “repentance” as used in the Bible means a **change of mind**.

This study will show that repentance in the Bible has nothing to do with the sinner forsaking **his own sins** as preparatory to trusting Jesus as his personal Saviour. Only Jesus' blood shed on the cross is able to purge a sinner from his sins. A sinner's relationship to his sin is that of a leper who has an inherited disease and can do absolutely nothing about it. He cannot put his own disease away and thus be healed, rather he must come to Jesus Christ and get healed internally (spiritually) before any symptoms on the outside of his body ever get cleared up.

After Jesus' finished work at the cross of Calvary, there is **not one time** in the Bible where a lost person was commanded to turn from his sins in order to be saved. In Paul's epistles, **not once** is the sinner left with the responsibility to forsake his own sins as a prerequisite to trusting Jesus Christ as his Saviour. So why is the phrase "repent of your sins" as preparatory to trusting Jesus Christ the most often quoted phrase in all of Christianity? The answer is given in this study.

It is wrong to lead sinners to approach God for salvation with any measure of self-righteousness. It is equally wrong to rob God of His glory of saving sinners by grace and to taint the cross of Calvary with the puny efforts of men trying to forsake their own sins. (Read Acts 15)

As required by the context of this study, the terms "**position,**" "**positional**" and "**positionally**" refer to the **spiritual relationship** a person has to Jesus Christ as being saved or lost. To illustrate, a believer's "**positional**" righteousness is **God's** righteousness a believer receives at salvation, in accordance with 2 Cor. 5:21 which says, "**For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**"

To understand the truth concerning repentance and lordship salvation (or any Bible doctrine), it is absolutely essential to **rightly divide** the scriptures. (2 Tim. 2:15) Otherwise, it is easy (even

in a King James Bible) to find scriptural support to believe that salvation is achieved in part by good works such as turning away from sin, keeping the ten commandments, living by the Sermon on the Mount, surrendering 100 percent to live for Jesus Christ, etc. To ignore right divisions within the scriptures will **always** lead to the preaching of a false gospel of good works.

Repentance

Church Tradition

Many churches traditionally preach that repentance is the requirement whereby sinners must turn from their sins prior to trusting Jesus Christ as Saviour. The so-called “gospel” tracts in many of these churches reflect this same erroneous teaching. Col. 2:8 says, **“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”**

In 1992 I completed a training course on how to be an effective soul-winner. This course taught that in order to be saved you must 1) repent of your sins, 2) place your faith in Jesus, and 3) surrender to Jesus as Lord. These three “requirements for salvation” were taught as **three equal sides of a triangle**. Further, the course also taught that **placing your faith in Jesus** means the same as **surrendering to Jesus as Lord**. I naively accepted this as the truth at the time and never once considered this training course’s content could be in error.

I struggled for almost fifteen years as the Holy Spirit kept convicting me that this training course was really teaching works for salvation. By God’s merciful providence, a Bible-believing pastor showed me from the scriptures that only a **change of mind** (toward God to believe the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ) and the placing of one’s faith in Jesus Christ are necessary to receive

the free gift of salvation. What a relief it was to learn that **Biblical** repentance is nothing more than a **change of mind** and that **Biblical** repentance is **not always** linked to sin.

The Leaven of Good Works for Salvation

When repentance is **incorrectly defined** as feeling sorry for sin or turning from sins, it then becomes the **good works** of men. The **only** good works that God recognizes are those which born-again believers do as they yield to and walk in the Spirit. (Gal. 5:16) Biblically, any self-righteous works men do to attain salvation [which would necessarily include men's pitiful attempts to turn from sin (Rom. 10:3–4) or surrender to Jesus as Lord (Luke 14:26, 33)], amount to nothing but filthy rags in the eyes of God. (Isaiah 64:6; Prov. 21:4) Gal. 5:9 says, **“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”** I wonder what the “leaven of two-thirds works” (repent of your sins and surrender to Jesus as Lord, as the soul-winners’ training course taught me was necessary to be saved), does to the “lump” we refer to as “the plan of salvation?”

Satan’s Addition of Good Works to the Plan of Salvation

The realization that the father of lies, the devil himself, has successfully (albeit deceitfully) added good works to the plan of salvation is the motivation for this study. I have observed over the years that nearly all **men are incurably self-righteous** and attempt to justify themselves to God in some measure. Only the Holy Spirit of God (John 14:26) can lead men to understand the grace of God, especially as it relates to the salvation of the soul.

Something must be written to stem the avalanche of works gospels (Gal. 1:6–9) unwittingly being preached in Baptist churches, being propagated through “gospel” tracts, and being proclaimed in personal witnessing. At the end of the day, what profit is there to “fulfilling” the great commission (Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8, etc.) with a gospel tainted by good works?

The basic issue is whether or not men are saved solely by believing on Jesus Christ alone i.e., His death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1–4), as a free gift of God’s grace. Does salvation by grace require you to clean up your life by turning from sin, and/or a complete surrender to Jesus as Lord of your life? **No Way!** Rom. 4:5 says **“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”**

Eternal Security

These issues get especially complicated when the matter of eternal security is considered. If a man must repent of his sins in order to be saved, how will he know if he has done it well enough? He cannot. Men cannot even begin to remember or keep track of all their sins, much less turn away from all of them. Any honest believer knows that as long as he is still in his fleshly body of clay, he still has an old sin nature and continues to sin (even with his best intentions not to sin) after he has trusted Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

Similarly, if a man must surrender to Jesus as the Lord of his life in order to be saved, the same argument holds. How can he know for sure that he has sufficiently made Jesus Lord in all areas of his life or if he has met God’s standard? Be reminded that God’s standard is **“100 percent absolute sinless perfection”** which nobody (except Jesus Christ) has ever met, or could ever meet. Nowhere in the scriptures does God “grade on the curve,” for we know **“...there is no iniquity with the LORD our God...”** (2 Chron. 19:7) Every saved sinner receives his **positional righteousness** as a free gift from Jesus Christ Himself (2 Cor. 5:21) and is **incapable** of establishing his own righteousness. (Rom. 10:1–4) Is it really true that “if Jesus is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all” as is advocated by many Baptists today? **Hardly**, as will be shown later in this study.

Definitions

How a person defines the word “**repentance**” dictates what he believes about it.

Webster’s Dictionary - 1. To feel sorry or self-reproachful for what one has done or not done; be conscience-stricken or contrite. 2. To feel such regret or dissatisfaction over some past action, intention, etc. as to change one’s mind about it. 3. In religious usage, to feel so contrite over one’s sins as to change, or decide to change, one’s ways; be penitent.

Bible Definition - Please review the **Appendix** for conclusive evidence that “repentance” is a **change of mind** (or if you prefer, a “**change of heart**”) that must occur **before** any differing action is taken. The many Bible uses of the various forms of the word “repent” indicate that a **change of mind** can apply to any subject, issue, or context.

Traditional Church Definition - The necessity (or willingness) to turn from sin as a prerequisite to trusting Jesus Christ as Saviour.

Comparison of Definitions

To analyze whether or not the **Traditional Church Definition** is correct according to the Bible, a close review of **Webster’s Dictionary** definition must be compared with the **Bible Definition**, with special consideration given to the **first mention** of “repent” in the Bible found in Gen. 6:6–7. While there are a few similarities in the above definitions, the differences are greater. To become settled on the correct definition, one must answer at least the following questions in light of the scriptures:

1. **In the Bible**, is the word “repent” a feeling of contrition or to feel sorry for past sins?
2. **In the Bible**, is a feeling of contrition or sorrow for past sins what God requires before a person can be saved?

3. **In the Bible**, is the word “repent” **always** connected with sin, as implied in **Webster’s Dictionary**?
4. **In the Bible**, is the word “repent” an **action** to reform, turn from, or forsake sin?
5. **In the Bible**, is the word “repent” anything more than a **change of mind**?

I submit to the reader that the **scriptural answer** to every question above is clearly “**NO!**”

Perhaps the best place to properly understand the correct **Bible Definition** of repentance is found in Matthew 21:28–29:

“[28] **But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. [29] He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.**”

In these verses, **Biblical** repentance is easily seen as a **change of mind**. Notice the action of the son corresponds to (but follows) his repentance (**change of mind**). Also notice the action taken is **separate from** and **results from** the **change of mind**. In the Bible, there are no cases where repentance is the different action taken; but repentance is **always** the **change of mind** that **precedes** the different action taken. (See **Appendix**)

Communication Errors

In communications generally, the most frequent errors occur when the person speaking **incorrectly assumes** his hearers understand his words with the same meaning the speaker intends. In most cases, miscommunications occur when the speaker and his audience are using **different definitions** for the terms the speaker is using. In other communication errors, the speaker simply fails to choose the appropriate words that convey his intended meaning.

For example, a preacher might say: “**You need to get right with God!**” or “**You need to repent of your sins!**” or “**You need to become a follower of Christ!**” or “**You need to make Jesus the Lord of your life!**” He may **intend** his statement to be directed only toward believers to exhort them to quit their sinning and start living a godly lifestyle. However, lost people in the audience will nearly always receive this same exhortation to mean they must clean up their lives and turn from all their sins before they can get saved; i.e., works salvation. Conversely, if the preacher is aiming the above statements at lost people, he may **intend** for lost people to **understand** that they must **change their minds** (Biblical repentance) about God and simply receive Jesus Christ alone by faith. However, the lost people may **understand** the message to be that their salvation is based on the necessity of turning away from their sins and living righteously, **the opposite** of the preacher’s **intended** meaning.

I do not believe Baptist preachers **intentionally** preach good works for salvation since they often quote “free-gift verses” such as Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8–9, or Titus 3:5. The miscommunications occur when “good works” is what lost people **hear or understand**. Let’s be clear, we are not condemning other men’s hearts or motives, but we are obligated (1 Cor. 2:15) to judge the words others use to see if they line up with the scriptures. True communications only occur when the hearers receive the exact message and meaning that is intended by the speaker. For this to happen, speakers must choose words that cannot be misunderstood by the hearers.

What is a Gift?

The most uneducated man on the street understands that a gift is something he receives **for free**. He understands that a gift has already been paid for in full by **somebody else** (usually the giver), and that he **never** has to pay for it, or else it is not a gift. Oh, that we had preachers today that were equally enlightened.

Salvation does **not** result from being faithful to God, but results from **Biblical** repentance and faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ alone. (Eph 2:8–9) Good works or men’s efforts to turn from their sins cannot earn, help earn, or keep God’s salvation. 1 Peter 1:5 says, **“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”**

The First Mention of Man Repenting

The **first mention** of man repenting in the Bible is found in Exodus 13:17, which says:

“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:”

Exodus 13:17 clearly shows repentance as a **change of mind** followed by the accompanying action. Specifically in this situation, God decided not to lead the nation of Israel through the land of the Philistines because He knew the Israelites might **change their minds** when they saw warfare, and take the action of returning to Egypt.

Also notice from Exodus 13:17 that if the people **had** changed their minds in this situation, it would be a change of mind **from something good** (being delivered from the 430-year bondage in Egypt) **to something bad** (to return back to the bondage of Egypt). This verse alone demolishes the **Traditional Church Definition** of repentance as turning from sin (**something bad**) to trusting Jesus Christ as Saviour (**something good**).

The Proper Sequence

In order to **change one’s mind** (Biblically repent), a person must **set his mind** on one thing (the **“from”**) and subsequently change it to something else (the **“to”**). For example, if someone has set his

mind to go to the grocery store on Tuesday but then **changes his mind** to go on Friday, he has just repented, according to the **Bible Definition**. While he has not yet gone to the grocery store because Friday has not come yet, he has repented nonetheless, according to the **Bible Definition**. Similarly, if someone has **set his mind** to never eat meat again, but then **changes his mind** and decides to eat a hamburger, he has just repented, according to the **Bible Definition**, even though he has not yet taken the action to order or eat the hamburger.

Common sense tells us that a **decision** made in one's mind **always precedes any action**, hence they are two separate things. With this understanding, it becomes obvious that the word "repent" as used in the Bible is simply a **change of mind**. Therefore, the proper sequence is always 1) to set your mind on something, 2) to **change your mind** (repent), and 3) to act accordingly.

This sequence would apply similarly to the question: "...Sirs, **what must I do to be saved?**" (Acts 16:30) Belief is an **action** that is always based on a willful choice made in the heart and mind. In considering salvation, a lost person may **falsely believe** that salvation is achieved by being water baptized (or by good works, church attendance, turning from sin, taking of sacraments, etc.). When he comes to understand the true gospel of Jesus Christ, that salvation is by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone as a free gift, he must **change his mind** (repent), and then take the action of placing his faith in Jesus Christ alone. This fulfills the Biblical mandate to repent without his feeble attempts to forsake his own sins. **Jesus Christ has already paid for all of the sins of the whole world some 2,000 years ago at the cross of Calvary.** (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 2:2)

Repentance and Sin

Those who refuse to **separate** "repentance" from "sin" make God a sinner, since in the Bible God Himself repents 28 times and refuses to repent another 9 times. Obviously God is sinless,

therefore to “repent” must mean that God **changes His mind** (Gen. 6:5–6) which is then followed by the action that accompanies His **change of mind** (Gen. 6:7). Since God Himself repents, we must acknowledge that **Biblical repentance is not always linked to sin.**

Repentance and Belief

Those who do not understand the correct relationship between “repentance” and “belief” must confess that Jesus did not **correctly** tell Nicodemus how to be born again in John 3, since Jesus only told him that in order to be born again, he only needed to **believe**. The action of believing on Jesus Christ would have, of necessity, been **preceded** by a **change of mind**. Nowhere in John chapter 3 did Jesus even mention the word “repent.” As a matter of fact, the word “**repent**” is not used a single time in the entire book of John, while various forms of the word “**believe**” are used more than 95 times. We know the stated purpose for the book of John is found in John 20:31 which says, “**But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.**” This is not to say that repentance is unnecessary for salvation, only that **Biblical** repentance is the **change of mind** (Acts 20:21) that **always precedes** the action to believe on Jesus Christ.

Notice also the word “repent” is **not used** in the account of the Philippian jailor in Acts 16:30–31: “[30] **And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?** [31] **And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.**” Again, Biblical repentance for salvation is the **change of mind** that **always precedes** the action to believe on Jesus Christ. To “**believe**” for salvation, in the Bible sense, is **not** simply to know (or have “head knowledge” of) the facts of the gospel, reciting a “1-2-3 sinner’s prayer,” or even to **change one’s mind, by itself**. To **believe for salvation** is when a sinner **changes his mind** toward God by 1) knowing the facts regarding the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1–4), 2) believing those facts to be true,

and 3) then placing his complete faith in Jesus Christ alone to save his soul.

Why People Go to Hell

Men **do not** go to Hell because they commit sin or live in sin (Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:10). Psalm 51:3 says, “**For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.**” Men go to Hell because 1) they fail to recognize they are sinners needing a Saviour and therefore never repent (**change their minds**) and trust Jesus Christ alone as their Saviour or 2) they recognize they are sinners needing a Saviour but fail to repent (**change their minds**) toward God and trust Jesus Christ alone by faith as the only way of salvation. (Acts 20:21; John 14:6) In short, men go to Hell for the sin of **unbelief** in Jesus Christ. (John 16:9)

It then follows that men certainly **do not** go to Hell because they fail (or are unwilling) to turn from their sins or continue to sin after they trust Jesus Christ alone for salvation. To believe otherwise makes a direct connection between faith and good works, which makes salvation 100 percent by good works. (Rom. 3:20; 3:28; 11:6)

Why People Go to Heaven

Men **do not** go to Heaven because they live righteously, honestly, clean up their lives, or make their best efforts to turn away from their sins. Contrary to much modern-day preaching, men **do not** go to Heaven because they become a disciple, servant, or a follower of Jesus Christ. Neither do they go to Heaven because they get water baptized, surrender their lives to Jesus, make a commitment to obey, follow, or live for Jesus, promise to make Jesus Lord of their lives, turn from or forsake their sin, attend church, or any other good works. (Eph. 2:9; Titus 3:5–6) All of these things are good things for a born-again believer to do, but they **cannot and must not** be done as a condition for getting saved, or else you are right back to works for salvation. We must not frustrate the grace of God. Galatians 2:21 says, “**I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.**”

Now, what was that “complicated” definition of a “gift” that was given on page 14 of this study?

Men go to Heaven because they respond properly to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. The convicting power of the Holy Spirit includes giving lost sinners a clear understanding of their sinful position before a holy and righteous God. The Holy Spirit reveals to lost sinners they are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), they are alone in the world without hope and without God (Eph. 2:12), and they are headed for Hell without Jesus Christ (Rev. 20:15). The Holy Spirit also reveals to lost sinners an understanding of the gospel of the grace of God through Jesus Christ as the only possible way of salvation. (John 3:7; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom. 6:23) With this understanding, sinners **Biblically** repent (Acts 17:30), acknowledge their sinful condition (Rom. 3:10–12, 23), call on (Rom. 10:13) and receive Jesus Christ alone (John 1:12; Rom. 10:9–10) by faith (Eph. 2:8–9), believing He died on the cross for their sins (Rom. 5:8), was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Cor. 15:1–4). Nothing more and nothing less. There is **only one** pure and true gospel; **all other** so-called “gospels” are of the devil. (Gal. 1:6–9; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom. 5:1)

Reformation or Regeneration

Temptation to sin and fleshly lusts will remain with all believers as long as they remain in their earthly bodies. To preach that men must turn from their sins (the **Traditional Church Definition**) as a prerequisite to trusting Jesus Christ is to preach **reformation** rather than **regeneration**. Salvation is a free gift of God’s grace, plain and simple, and can **only** be received by **Biblical** repentance and faith in Jesus Christ alone. Biblical salvation by grace comes with absolutely no conditions, no stipulations, and no strings attached (before or after salvation), **or else it really is not a free gift at all.**

Good Works as “Proof of Salvation”

Contrary to nearly all modern-day preaching and teaching, good works **do not and cannot** prove or disprove the genuineness of a man’s salvation. If good works prove that men are saved, then modern-day cult members must really be saved because many of them live more “righteous” and “devout” lives than most people who call themselves Baptists. Taking verses out of their proper context (e.g. James 2:17, 20, 26; Matt. 24:13; Mark 13:13; Heb. 3:6, 14) is one of the ways this false doctrine is propagated.

What is Grace?

It’s a crying shame that lost people understand grace better than most preachers, but many of these lost people will never be saved. Why? Because they have been told all their lives they must turn from their sins, live a good life, and surrender 100 percent to Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives. Most lost people are not ready to make that kind of commitment because they enjoy sin and don’t want to be like the hypocrites they see in churches today.

Without the Holy Spirit of God, it is **impossible** to persuade lost people that salvation by grace is **God’s absolutely free gift of eternal life**. Grace is God’s unmerited and undeserved favor toward Hell-bound and Hell-deserving sinners. Salvation by grace is available to whosoever will receive it by **Biblical** repentance and faith in Jesus Christ alone. Salvation is **not** a commitment or a promise to live for, follow, obey, or serve Jesus Christ. Preaching that salvation is “becoming a follower of Christ” has gone on for so long that when soul-winners proclaim the true gospel of the grace of God, many lost people respond as if you are trying to trick them.

The Devil’s Snare

Preachers who preach the **Traditional Church Definition** of repentance, i.e., that men must turn (or be willing to turn) from their sins as a requirement for salvation, fall into the devil’s snare

of preaching works for salvation, although they will deny it if you ask them about it. These preachers don't realize it, but they are being used by the devil as a stumblingblock between lost sinners and salvation in Jesus Christ. It's strange to hear preachers quote "free gift" verses (such as Rom. 5:15–18; 6:23; 11:6, and Eph. 2:8–9) often in the same sermons they preach the necessity to turn from sins as a condition of salvation. The devil must sit back and laugh uncontrollably.

Many preachers have been beguiled in their hearts and think they are actually preaching salvation by grace through faith as a free gift, while their audience is hearing "good works" and remain in a state of confusion about exactly what they must do to be saved. Some preachers proclaim faithfulness, surrender, discipleship, service, etc. for salvation to such an extent that even saved people feel they are lost and start doubting their salvation. It goes something like this: "You better get right with God or else you'll die and go to Hell!"

I admit that it's still a free country and even preachers have a right to free speech, but it's very deceptive and discouraging to hear good works preached for salvation when the sign in the parking lot says it is a Baptist church.

2 Cor. 11:3 says, **"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."** This verse can readily apply to:

- The vast majority of Bible preachers and teachers anywhere in the world of any denomination.
- The vast majority of so-called "gospel" tracts found in tract racks in the many Baptist churches, including most Fellowship Tract League and quite possibly all Chick tracts.

Repentance and Turning from Sin

Lost people **must not trust** their futile attempts to turn from their sins for salvation, a truly impossible task if there ever was one. Which person (saved or lost) have you ever met that has completely turned from his sins? I'd sure like to meet such a person, but I know there aren't any to meet in this life on earth. I surely wouldn't qualify, would you?

There is a doctrinal statement we can learn something from in Job 22:5, which says “**Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?**” Certainly it is true that all believer's sins have been forgiven **positionally** and every believer has been spiritually regenerated and given a new divine nature in Christ. However, God's assessment of **every man's flesh** is that his iniquities are **infinite**. Another reading of Rom. 7:14–24 is in order regarding how Paul viewed his flesh some 25 years after he was saved in Acts 9. Paul was **not** a lost man in Romans 7, as some contend. Perhaps all of us need an attitude adjustment for how God really sees **both** lost and saved men's carnal and sinful flesh.

If it were possible for a sinner to successfully turn from all of his sins:

- Would he not be earning his salvation, at least in part?
- Would he not walk in sinless perfection?

If men continue to sin after being saved (which all men do, unfortunately), obviously they have not turned from all their sins. Men may (and should) confess their sins regularly to “stay on short accounts” with God, but they still have **not** turned from all their sins.

By God's mercy, grace, and power at salvation, God may deliver a new believer from some of his outward sins such as drunkenness, smoking, drugs, etc. (or He may not if the believer chooses not to walk in the Spirit). But even if God delivers a believer from

all outward (visible) sins, doesn't he still have **many** inward (invisible) sins such as pride, anger, covetousness, impatience, envy, lust, thoughts of foolishness, things not of faith, and innumerable sins of omission, to name a few? Would God accept a turn from 75 percent of your sins? How about 51 percent, would that suffice? Don't be ridiculous. Can you imagine a holy and perfect God accepting any man's pitiful efforts to reform himself or forsake his own sins as a condition of salvation? To successfully turn from sin would mean the person would continually walk in sinless perfection and very few deranged people today dare make such a bold (and false) proclamation. **Even if** men were able to successfully turn away from all their sins (**which they have not**), their reliance on this accomplishment for salvation would amount to works salvation, which God will not accept, and end up dooming their souls to Hell forever. (Isa. 64:6; Titus 3:5)

Preaching the Impossible

Why preachers insist on preaching what is **impossible** for any man to accomplish and what they have also failed to accomplish themselves is perhaps the greatest mystery and greatest hypocrisy of all time. There is one specific question to ask a preacher who preaches the necessity of turning from your sins as necessary for salvation. That question is: "**Have you?**" When he lies to you and says that he has turned from all of his sins, tell him you are going to ask his wife or children. If he says he has **not** turned from all his sins, ask him why he preaches works for salvation and why everybody else **except him** must turn from their sins in order to be saved. There is such hypocrisy and deception in the pulpit these days it's no wonder the church is in such a state of apostasy.

Many times I have taken the true gospel of grace to the streets and asked people if they are saved, born again, 100 percent sure they are going to Heaven when they die, etc. Their response is very often a works-based answer such as "I'm working on it," or "I'm doing the best I can," or "I go to church," or "I've been baptized," etc. It is obvious the devil has successfully transformed virtually

the entire world into a “works for salvation” belief system and he has propagated it through the centuries by deceived preachers and teachers. Maybe that is why Matthew 7:14 has the word “few” in it. After all, the devil is the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4), why shouldn’t he deceive the masses by corrupting (2 Cor. 2:17) the plan of salvation too? The devil’s addition of good works to the gospel of grace has created much confusion in the minds of men about what they must do to be saved.

Contrast the devil’s work described above with 1 Cor. 14:33 which says, “**For God is not *the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.***” and 1 Tim. 2:4 which says, “**Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.**”

Repentance and Faith in Salvation

After learning from the **Appendix** that **Biblical** repentance is only a “**change of mind**” and is not always linked to sin, we can conclude that **Biblical** repentance and faith are related but are not the same thing. Remember that in order to repent (to have a **change of mind**) you must have both elements: “**from**” and “**to.**” **Biblical** repentance required for salvation is a **change of mind** away **from** unbelief in Jesus Christ as Saviour (or away **from** whatever false belief the person has his mind and heart set on for the salvation of his soul) and **toward** God and the gospel of grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

A sinner who has previously rejected the true gospel of Jesus Christ must **change his mind** away **from** his unbelief. Faith is the action to believe on Jesus Christ alone for salvation. The action of faith in Jesus Christ is not **Biblical** repentance, but **comes after** the **change of mind**. At no point does a person turn from his sins, except to the extent that failing to believe on Jesus Christ as Saviour (or any **false** belief for salvation) of course is sinful. For salvation, the **only** sin that must be **Biblically** repented of is **unbelief** in Jesus Christ. (John 16:9)

Unscriptural Clichés

While there are a number of unscriptural clichés regularly used by church-going folks, a few of them relate to this study and merit comment.

“REPENT OF YOUR SINS” - This unscriptural cliché is the **most** commonly printed and spoken phrase in the entire Christian vocabulary. It is so often used (and misused) in preaching, teaching, and “gospel” tracts that it is almost never given a second thought. This cliché is **not found a single time in the Bible**, but is regularly used today as a requirement to tell sinners they must (or be willing to) turn from their sins in order to be saved. When this cliché is used, the word “repent” is almost never defined correctly as a **change of mind**. (See **Appendix**) In the few instances where “repent” or “repentance” does get defined, it is almost always **incorrectly** defined as feeling sorry for one’s sins or turning from one’s sins, which is clearly salvation by works.

In essence, the **false** doctrine of “repenting of your sins in order to be saved” does **not** require the atonement of Jesus Christ at the cross of Calvary, since this **false** doctrine finds justification within the response of the sinner himself. Conversely, when a person gets genuinely saved, he simply comes to Jesus Christ as a sinner with absolutely no ability to turn from his sins. After a **change of mind** to understand and believe the true gospel, he calls out to the Lord and receives the free gift of eternal life by faith in Jesus Christ alone. There are no scriptural requirements for a sinner today to

turn from his sins in any way, shape, or form. God **will not** accept any payment for sin other than the blood atonement of His Son Jesus Christ at the cross of Calvary. It was there that Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2) Salvation is a free gift and is available to “whosoever will” receive Jesus Christ as Saviour. (Rom. 10:13)

“TURN OR BURN” - This unscriptural cliché is used by those wanting to communicate “where the rubber meets the road.” The message is that if a sinner does not turn away from his sins, he will burn forever in Hell. The people who use this cliché apparently **don’t think** about what they are saying. Surely they must know in their hearts that they haven’t turned away from all of their own sins. It is abject hypocrisy to tell others they must do what the Bible does not require and what they haven’t succeeded in doing themselves. Hopefully these people will one day understand that salvation is a free gift to be received by faith and not something one merits by turning from his sins.

“GET RIGHT OR GET LEFT” - This unscriptural cliché clearly communicates works for salvation. Salvation is not **“getting right”** in the sense of living righteously or turning from your sins. Genuine believers are **not going to “get left”** behind at the rapture **for any reason**, even if they don’t “live right.” Sinners are lost for only one reason: they fail to repent (**change their minds**) and trust Jesus Christ as Saviour. Why do churches and preachers allow the devil to **contaminate** the gospel with good works?

“IF YOU WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN, TURN RIGHT AND GO STRAIGHT” - This unscriptural cliché has been seen on church signs, especially when the church is on the right-hand side of the road. Whatever the reader might understand from this cliché, it is most certainly communicating works for salvation. Does a person need to **go to church** to be saved? Does a person need to **go to this particular church** to be saved? Does a person need to **turn from his sins** to be saved? Does a person need to **live right** to be saved?

Does a person need to be **heterosexual** to be saved? The answer to all of these questions is a hundred times “**NO!**” Unless, of course, you believe salvation today is partly by good works.

The unscriptural implications of this cliché are numerous. What an abomination it is for churches to be used by the devil to promote works salvation. It’s doubtful if the people using this and similar clichés have any idea how a sinner gets saved. Why don’t churches use verses from a King James Bible on signs in front of their churches? They would if they really believed Hebrews 4:12 or Isaiah 55:11. It is **not** man’s words, wisdom, or cute clichés that brings conviction or saves souls. It is God’s words in that old black Book (KJV) and the Holy Spirit of God that makes all the difference! (Psalm 12:6–7; 107:11; John 8:47; Rom. 10:17)

“**ADMIT IT AND QUIT IT**” - Some preachers use this cliché to convey the idea that repentance is both confessing your sins and then completely quitting (forsaking) them. When aimed at believers as an exhortation to holy living, this cliché is doctrinally sound (1 John 1:9; Proverbs 28:13). However, when this cliché is preached to lost people, it communicates good works for salvation.

“**QUIT YOUR MEANNESS**” (OR ANY OTHER SIN YOU CARE TO NAME) - While the cliché “Quit Your Meanness” was apparently taken from a famous preacher’s sermon title many years ago, it is **not** what the scriptures teach concerning **Biblical** repentance or about salvation by grace. **Even if** a sinner was successful in reforming, cleaning up, or quitting his sinful lifestyle as being necessary for salvation, it would amount to good works and God would reject him. (Rom. 4:5) The righteousness that a sinner needs to go to Heaven is found **only** in Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 5:21); it is **never** found in his own good works. (Titus 3:5–6)

False Ideas

How is it possible for the **unscriptural** teaching that a sinner must “repent of his sins” to be saved gain such a wide acceptance in Christian churches today? It comes from a number of **false ideas** that come about in the natural minds and traditions of men (Mark 7:5–13) who won’t study the scriptures, but mainly read commentaries and mimic historical positions of the theologians they trust. Psalm 118:8 says, “***It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.***”

Some of the false (unscriptural) ideas that men have regarding repentance are listed below:

- To man’s natural way of thinking, giving up sin in order to be saved is reasonable and logical. Men **falsely** rationalize that “**good**” people go to Heaven and “**bad**” people go to Hell. We are told that it is sin that separates men from God, which is true in a general sense. However, it is the failure to believe on Jesus Christ alone that actually dooms a soul to Hell.
- Good parents make great efforts and take pride in teaching their children (from a very young age) some very valuable concepts. These include: “there are no free lunches,” and “you must work for everything you get,” and “work hard and it will always pay off,” and “you must pull yourself up by your own bootstraps.” The “disconnect” came (thankfully) when God decided **not** to consult men when He set up His plan

of salvation by grace. Salvation by grace runs **counter** to the natural mind and concepts of men. That is one of the reasons why it can only be received by **faith**. What natural mind could believe all of mankind's sins could be **fully** paid for by the crucifixion of a Jewish man who claimed to be the Son of God some 2,000 years ago? God knew from the beginning that men would be unable to forsake their own sins. When it comes to salvation, it certainly wasn't free to Jesus Christ. But to men today, salvation is absolutely, 100 percent totally free. In fact, **you cannot receive salvation** if you attempt to earn it by your own good works. The Biblical doctrine of salvation by grace does not fit the "capitalistic mindset," and the devil uses this to his advantage to damn souls to Hell every day. Hell is filled with people who had good intentions and who attempted to merit salvation by good works.

- Every believer would agree that it is always good when a person turns away from his sins. Generally speaking, I certainly would go on record as being in favor whenever anybody turns from or forsakes his sins. However, if a sinner turns from his sins **for the purpose of meriting salvation**, it becomes good works and God is **not** going to accept it. Men **falsely** rationalize that if they reduce or quit their sinning, God will then view them as a better person and deserving of more favorable consideration from God. Men **falsely** reason that if a sinner would just turn away from his sins and do right most of the time, then God will "tip the scales" in his favor and save his soul. Nothing could be further from the truth!
- When men get "educated" and finally recognize their **total inability** to turn from all their sins, then "**the bar is lowered**" to only "a **willingness** to turn from sins," (e.g. Chick Tracts and many others). Men **falsely** reason that if they can just **stop desiring** to sin and are **willing** to do their best not to sin, that God will ultimately have mercy on them and save their souls. What a deception and a lie! These deceived men fail

to realize that **100 percent sinless perfection** is required to get into Heaven and sinners are **made** that way only through **Biblical** repentance and trusting Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. (2 Cor. 5:21) A sinner's **desire** to forsake or turn from his sins is **not a scriptural prerequisite** to salvation.

- Some (even preachers) **falsely** proclaim that salvation is a sinner turning from his sinful lifestyle and promising to follow and live for Christ. **Not true!** Salvation is Christ's finished work at the cross **on behalf of the sinner**. Salvation is **not** God assisting us to obey, it is Christ's obedience **on the sinner's behalf**. Salvation is **not** a sinner giving or surrendering his life to Christ, it is Jesus Christ giving His life **in the sinner's place**. Salvation is not a sinner **giving** God anything, it is the sinner **receiving** from God the free gift of salvation. That's right, Jesus Christ purchased mankind's complete salvation and made the **full atonement** for all of men's sins at the cross of Calvary **without one iota of help** from mankind. Men need only to **Biblically** repent (**change their minds**) toward God and believe the gospel and receive the free gift of eternal life by faith in Jesus Christ alone. (John 1:12)
- As described earlier in this study under the heading "**Why People Go to Heaven,**" we know the convicting power of the Holy Spirit includes giving lost sinners a clear understanding of their sinful position before a holy and righteous God. The Holy Spirit reveals to lost sinners they are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), they are alone in the world without hope and without God (Eph. 2:12), and they are headed for Hell without Jesus Christ (Rev. 20:15). The Holy Spirit also reveals to lost sinners an understanding of the gospel of the grace of God through Jesus Christ as the only possible way of salvation. (John 3:7; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom. 6:23)

However, many hold a **false** view of **repentance** as it relates to Holy Spirit conviction. After a sinner has supposedly yielded to Holy Spirit conviction, it is **falsely** said the sinner has repented when he forsakes his sins and gives up his pride, self-will, and love of sin. The sinner may even promise to faithfully follow and obey Jesus Christ for the rest of his life. This type of repentance is **falsely** viewed as complete when the sinner “makes Jesus Lord over all,” or “gives Jesus full control of his life,” or “makes a commitment to take up his cross and follow Jesus Christ.” This type of repentance is **unscriptural** and is **falsely** understood as “a dying to self so Jesus Christ can sit on the throne of the heart,” or as many preachers say, “getting right with God.” What a deception of the devil!

- Repentance is **falsely** viewed as a sinner separating himself from his sin so that God will respond and save him. This type of repentance is **falsely** viewed as meriting God’s mercy **in response to** a sinner’s willingness to show sorrow or contrition for his sinfulness, and a sincere desire to turn away from his sins. Not true! In reality, salvation is **not** God saving a sinner who attempts to **separate himself** from or **forsake** his own sins. Instead, salvation is God saving a sinner’s soul so he will be separated from the eternal penalty of his sins at the instant he believes on Jesus Christ. After believing on Jesus Christ, **if** the believer continually surrenders his body to the power and control of the Holy Spirit, over time God will deliver him from much of his sinful conduct and lifestyle. As a practical matter, believers who are still in their earthly bodies never reach sinless perfection, but surrendering to the power and control of the Holy Spirit ensures believers will sin less and less with time.

Lordship Salvation

Lordship Salvation and the Traditional Church Definition of Repentance

Issues relating to both **repentance** and **lordship salvation** often overlap, so both topics need to be considered within the same Bible study. Many of the issues which relate to lordship salvation have already been addressed in the first part of this study which dealt with repentance.

The **Traditional Church Definition** of repentance (the necessity to turn from sin as a prerequisite to trusting Jesus Christ as Saviour) has fueled the lordship salvation heresy that is prevalent in many churches today. Lordship salvation came out of the **unscriptural** Calvinistic doctrine of “perseverance of the saints,” which teaches that if a person is truly saved, he will be faithful to obey God and persevere to the end with good works.

The Main Issues

The main issues associated with lordship salvation are as follows:

- To be saved, is it enough to believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour or must a person surrender his life to Jesus as Lord of his life as a condition for salvation?
- To be saved, must a person make Jesus Christ the Lord of his life at the **point in time** he believes on Jesus Christ for salvation?
- Is receiving Jesus Christ as **Saviour** and surrendering to Jesus as **Lord** only **one** action, or are they **two** separate actions?

- Is the believer's **position** in Christ the same thing as his **practice** (conduct) in daily living?
- Are **salvation** and **discipleship** the same thing?
- Is rejecting Jesus as Lord the same thing as unbelief?

To get to the truth, these issues must be dealt with by rightly dividing the scriptures.

Lordship Salvation Belief System

Lordship salvation began with the **unscriptural** teaching that submission, faithfulness, and obedience to God's commandments are necessary conditions to being saved. Those who teach lordship salvation insist that a constant walk of obedience to God's commandments and living a continual lifestyle of spiritual growth is the true test for whether an individual is truly saved. It sounds good on the surface because every true believer is ultimately predestinated to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29). However, anytime a **conditional relationship** is established between salvation by grace and the performance of good works by men, it is **always false doctrine**. (Eph. 2:8–10; Titus 3:5; Rom. 6:23) **Scriptural** salvation by grace **does not include** a single good work of men, or else it is not grace. Receiving the free gift of salvation **always** comes first, then **afterwards** comes discipleship.

Proponents of lordship salvation believe the gospel of grace includes surrender, obedience, and faithfulness to the lordship of Jesus in every area of the believer's life. It comes out in preaching something like this, "If Jesus isn't Lord of your life, then you are still lost in your sins!" or "Nobody can receive Jesus as Saviour and reject Him as Lord of his life!" Those who teach lordship salvation insist (in error) that **1)** believing on Jesus Christ for salvation and **2)** resolving to obey and live for Him are not two things, but one.

Lordship salvation is very dangerous because under this **false teaching** a man's assurance of salvation is based on his own good works **instead** of the finished work of Jesus Christ at the cross of

Calvary. It is also very dangerous in that it gives **false assurance** of salvation to those who really are trusting in their own good works to save them.

Lordship salvation is a frontal attack on **scriptural** justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Lordship salvation promotes good works and total commitment as integral to “saving faith,” and is a **false doctrine**, according to the scriptures. (Eph. 2:8–10; Rom. 5:1; 1 Tim. 4:1)

Newborn Babes

One of the problems with those who teach lordship salvation is their failure to recognize that new believers start out as newborn babes. (1 Cor. 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:2) Lordship salvation preachers will never preach on 1 Cor. 3 or 2 Peter 1:9 but will quote 2 Cor. 5:17 frequently and take it out of context every time. While God gives some believers instant victory over some of their sins of the flesh right after they get saved, many do not experience victory over the sins of the flesh for a long time, and some never get victory at all in this earthly life. (1 Cor. 3:11–15)

Although popular in many pulpits today, it is **unscriptural** to preach that all born-again believers will experience spiritual growth, faithfulness, and deliverance from sins of the flesh in this life, or else they were not truly saved. It is wrong and dangerous to transfer one believer’s experience in gaining victory over sins of the flesh onto a “track” that all others must follow. Of course, there is one common element in salvation, **Biblical repentance (change of mind)** and belief on Jesus Christ alone. If salvation is genuine **only if** there is victory over sins of the flesh and faithfulness in obeying God’s commands, then salvation today is by faith **plus** good works, which it is not.

What Really Happens at Salvation

At salvation, a sinner is **spiritually** circumcised, **spiritually** baptized (Col. 2:11–14), **delivered** from the eternal penalty of sin

in Hell (John 3:16), and **receives** a new divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) that **cannot sin**. (1 John 3:9) How much God delivers a believer from sins of the flesh is proportionate to how much he walks in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16), which is now resident in the body of the believer. (1 Cor. 6:19–20) Until a believer dies or gets a new body at the Rapture, his fleshly lusts and carnal desires are still present and he continues to sin (1 Cor. 3:1–15; 1 John 1:8), but will undoubtedly endure the chastening hand of God. (Heb. 12:6–11)

In fact, a **believer** who **fails** to walk in the Spirit may yield to his old sinful nature for so long that it is possible for him to forget he was purged from his sins when he trusted Jesus Christ as his Saviour. 2 Pet. 1:9 says. **“But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”**

The “Old Man”

Those who promote lordship salvation greatly err when they **deny** that all believers (presently) have two natures. To preach that a sinner’s old nature is eradicated at salvation is not supported by the scriptures. Rom. 6:6 says, **“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed...”** **Positionally**, our old nature is crucified with Jesus Christ right now, but no believer was **physically** on the cross and crucified with Jesus. Notice Rom. 6:6 ends with **“...that henceforth we should not serve sin.”** Believers are still in earthen vessels, are they not? In this last phrase, the Holy Spirit, as author of the scriptures, acknowledges the **possibility** for a believer **who is still in his earthly body** to still **“serve sin”** but **exhorts** him not to do so. Only **after** believers receive their **glorified bodies** at the Rapture will they be **unable** to sin any longer or **“serve sin.”** (Rom. 8:23; 1 John 3:2)

Salvation is not reforming the “old man,” it is being **born again** by the Holy Spirit of God. (John 3:5–8) Salvation is about **receiving** the Spirit of God through what the Bible calls **“...washing of**

regeneration; and renewing of the Holy Ghost...” (Titus 3:5–6) Salvation is Jesus Christ paying mankind’s sin debt at the cross of Calvary so that anyone may **freely receive** the full atonement so they can go to Heaven and escape Hell. (Rev. 22:17; John 3:16–18) At salvation, not a single element of a believer’s old carnal and sinful nature changes. If the spiritual growth, discipleship, and faithfulness of all believers (the lordship of Jesus) were **automatic** at salvation, then why was much of the New Testament written specifically to exhort believers to put away the sinful flesh and walk in the Spirit? (Eph. 4:31; Gal. 5:13; Heb. 12:1; Titus 2:11; 2 Pet. 1:5–8) Also, why would it be necessary to preach against sin from the pulpit except for the sole purpose of winning the lost?

God’s “Gatekeepers”

Many well-meaning preachers have an **unscriptural** belief (Matt. 13:24–30) that it is part of their job to be God’s gatekeeper to weed out the “tares” from the “wheat” in the church. The label of “easy-believism” is attached to those who don’t keep the “false professors” out of the church. You hear it in comments like, “If he’d just **really** get saved he’d get the victory over his sinful lifestyle,” or “If he were **really** saved, he would be faithful to the house of God,” or “**No way** could a saved person possibly commit such an awful sin,” etc. Folks who struggle with sin might not be saved, but there again, they might be saved and just need some encouragement, understanding, patience, and scriptural direction from those who are more spiritual (or more humble). (Gal. 6:1–2; 1 Cor. 10:12)

The Bible is clear that **only the Lord** knows who the true believers are (Nahum 1:7; 2 Tim. 2:19) because God sees the heart, man only looks on the outward appearance. (1 Sam. 16:7) It is not the job of the pastor or any believer to assume God’s role and judge the salvation of men (other than a humble discernment for the purpose of effective soul winning). The believer’s job is to preach the pure gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15) and leave the judging and results to God.

How Salvation is Determined in the Bible

Undoubtedly, not every person who has ever prayed a “sinner’s prayer” or has made a profession of faith is truly born-again. However, the basis for determining one’s eternal destination is not found in his faithfulness, service, obedience to God’s commandments, or other good works (**or the lack thereof**). Everyone’s eternal destination will be determined by nineteen one-syllable words found in 1 John 5:12, which are **“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”** This begs the question, “Are lordship salvation preachers as interested in their members’ souls as they are in manipulating their members’ pocketbooks, lives, and faithfulness to their church?” If lordship salvation pastors can keep their members believing that salvation is somehow linked to faithfulness or other good works, they can keep their members “under their thumbs.” After all, what sincere believer wouldn’t increase his faithfulness if he were convinced he’d go to Hell if he didn’t?

Jesus as Lord

It is common today to hear lordship preachers proclaim, “Either Jesus is Lord **of all**, or He is not Lord **at all**.” By this the preacher means that if professing believers are not walking in the Spirit i.e., “living it,” then they were never truly saved and are “false professors.” After all, the Bible says in Phil. 2:12 **“...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”** Is this a fear and trembling of going to Hell, as lordship salvation preachers want you to think? Of course not! If it were, then salvation is by works even if the preacher quotes Eph. 2:8–9 ten times in his sermon.

Why people are willing to live their entire Christian lives in bondage to preaching of the **false doctrine** of lordship salvation is beyond comprehension. It may have something to do with the famine found in Amos 8:11, which says **“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words**

of the LORD:” Jesus said in John 8:36, **“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”** Salvation by grace is about liberty and freedom in Christ, not bondage to the Law or to a lordship salvation preacher.

Lordship salvation preachers also claim that in order to be genuinely saved, you must take Jesus not only as your Saviour, but you must also make Jesus the Lord of your life as well. **If this is true**, then salvation is **not** a free gift after all. Salvation would be directly linked to making Jesus the Lord over your life, which nobody has accomplished, and if they had, it would be works for salvation, which God will not accept. (Is. 64:6; Rom. 11:6) Salvation is **not** “the gift that costs you everything.” Surrender, service, discipleship, faithfulness, and obeying God’s commands are what believers do **after they are saved** which indeed does cost them everything. (Rom. 12:1–2)

Nobody is arguing that Jesus Christ is not “the Lord” in his title, position, and function. The issue is whether salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone as a free gift, or if men must perform good works and submit to Jesus’ lordship in order to be saved. A related issue is whether a man’s service for God **after** conversion has any effect on his **spiritual position** as a saved child of God. The gospel of grace in the Bible **never combines** 1) salvation (a one-time instantaneous event) and 2) discipleship (the ongoing process of a believer’s service, faithfulness, obedience, etc.). (Rom. 12:1–2; Eph. 2:8–10)

Cheap Grace and Easy-believism

Those who teach lordship salvation **falsely** accuse Bible-believers of promoting a cheap grace and easy-believism. The reality from the scriptures is that God paid the highest possible price for men’s salvation by giving Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. God did this so that salvation by grace could be given to man as a **free gift**, otherwise it would not be a gospel of **grace**.

Regarding easy-believism, nowhere in the scriptures is salvation presented as something hard or difficult. (Acts 16:31; John 1:12; 3:16; 3:36; 5:24; 6:37; Rom. 4:5; 5:1; 10:9–13; Eph. 2:8–9, etc.) Besides the damage that lordship salvation preachers do by connecting salvation by grace with good works, **perverted versions** of the Bible often make matters worse when they add works to the plan of salvation. For example, Matthew 7:14 in the New King James Version says “Because narrow is the gate and **difficult** is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” The way is “**narrow**” as in the KJV, but **never difficult!** (John 14:6) The Bible confirms many times that salvation by grace is not only **totally free**, but that it is **not difficult**. (John 1:12; Matt. 11:29–30)

Obedience to the Gospel Equals Believing in Jesus Christ

To justify their **false** belief of the necessity of walking obediently to the Lord in order to be saved (surrendering to the lordship of Jesus), the teachers of lordship salvation contend the gospel is something that has to be **obeyed**. Their prooftexts are Rom. 10:16 which says, “**But they have not all obeyed the gospel...**” or 1 Peter 4:17 which says, “**...what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?**” or 2 Thes. 1:8 which says, “**In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:**”

The scriptural rebuttal is found by looking at Rom. 10:16 in its entirety. It says, “**But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?**” Rom. 10:16 defines **not obeying** the gospel as **not believing** it. Therefore, the **only** connection **obedience** has with the gospel of the grace of God is **believing** in Jesus Christ.

Lordship Salvation Primary Proof-Text

The favorite proof-text for those who teach lordship salvation is nearly always 2 Cor. 5:17, which says “**Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold,**

all things are become new.” Preachers who take this verse out of its **positional** context create much confusion for both saved and lost men alike. Lost men think they must give up their sins in order to get saved and “would-be soul winners” end up propagating lordship salvation to the lost. The devil has many deceitful tools in his toolbox, and he no doubt has a wrench that fits every nut!

If only the verses following in the same chapter (2 Cor. 5:18–21) are studied, one can easily see the context is **the believer’s position spiritually in Christ**. The passage deals not only with the believer’s own **spiritual reconciliation** through Christ, but also the ministry God has given believers, which is the **spiritual reconciliation** of lost people’s souls to God through Jesus Christ. Everyone would agree that upon receiving salvation, all things change **positionally (spiritually)** for new believers. After getting saved, new believers receive or will receive at least the following ten **spiritual** blessings:

1. A new heavenly Father
2. A new eternal destination—Heaven
3. A new ability to understand the scriptures
4. A new Comforter in his body (the Holy Spirit)
5. An opportunity to bring glory to God forever
6. An opportunity to serve God now
7. Rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ
8. A new glorified body at the Rapture
9. An heir of God
10. A joint-heir with Christ

In contrast, applying 2 Cor. 5:17 to “all things” **physically** because the phrase “all things” is found in the verse is simply ridiculous. How ridiculous is it? Proponents of lordship salvation should ask themselves a few simple questions about the “all things” and see if they relate to **anything physically** becoming new. For example: Did your gender become new when you got saved? What about your old house or car, did they become new? If you liked sports before you got saved, did you stop liking sports after you got

saved? If you loved your family before you got saved, did you stop loving them after you got saved?

Be aware that the word “**all**” as used in the Bible **does not** always mean “absolutely all without limitation;” (e.g. Rom. 5:18b; Eph. 6:21 cf. Col. 4:9) while the word “**many**” oftentimes **does** mean “absolutely all without limitation” (e.g. John 1:12; Rom. 2:12; 5:15a; 5:19a; 6:3). A review of the **first mention** of the phrase “**all things**” (Gen. 9:3) shows the context is **limited** to food; similarly, in 2 Cor. 5:17 the context of “**all things**” is **limited** to spiritual things.

The point is that **nothing changes physically** about anyone when he gets saved **unless and until** he **willfully** yields to and walks in obedience to the Holy Spirit of God. This way God gets all the glory, exactly the way God intended it. If a believer **does not yield** to the Holy Spirit, he **will not change physically** and will live carnally in the flesh. (Gal. 5:16) A carnal believer who **fails** to walk in the Spirit is **just as saved** as a spirit-filled believer, but the carnal believer doesn’t look like it from the outside in his daily conduct and lifestyle.

The Old Nature versus the New Nature

The new believer will either **feed** or **starve** his new nature that is in Christ. If the believer feeds his new nature, he will grow spiritually and his new nature inside will begin to show up in his **outward** behavior and lifestyle. If he starves his new nature that is in Christ and feeds his old nature, his old nature of flesh and carnality will dominate his life and make the new believer look like he is lost on the outside. Carnal believers (1 Cor. 3:1–4) will undoubtedly experience God’s chastening (Heb. 12:5–11) and will suffer much loss of reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Carnal believers are saved nonetheless (1 Cor. 3:11–15), regardless of what lordship salvation preachers say. Therefore, it follows that **whether or not** a believer walks in the Spirit and gets victory over his sins of the flesh, it remains that his salvation is solely based on whether or not he has **Biblically** repented and trusted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour.

A believer's works **after** salvation will determine his rewards (or loss) at the Judgment Seat of Christ. (Rom. 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:10)

What about James Chapter 2?

Many denominations, including many Baptist churches, misapply passages written for and addressed to the Jews. Such is the case with James 2:14, 17–18, 20–26 (cf. James 1:1), which many people take out of context when they apply these verses to salvation by grace. This promotes a **false** gospel and creates confusion since these passages contradict Paul's epistles regarding salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone without any good works at all. (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16)

Those who twist James 2 to make it fit the Church Age fall into the snare of lordship salvation, because they have no way to explain these verses other than to say that a believer today proves he is saved by **how he lives**.

False doctrine nearly always requires the invention of new **unscriptural** terms such as “saving faith,” which is not found a single time in the Bible. Only then can those who support lordship salvation wrest the scriptures and teach that a genuine believer will **always** produce good works after salvation as **proof** he is really saved. Anybody who understands salvation by grace knows that many people who live good, clean, honest, and righteous lives are going to end up in Hell because they have failed to **Biblically** repent and trust Jesus Christ alone for salvation. So where is the logic in saying that to live righteously proves a person is truly saved? Those who explain James 2 in this way fall right back into the trap of 2 Cor. 5:17.

Concluding Remarks

It is the intent of this study to help the reader see the “big picture” of just how subtle and deceitful the devil really is (Eph. 6:12; 1 Pet. 5:8) in his efforts to add works to the plan of salvation. The devil will use anybody inside or outside the church to accomplish

his ungodly purpose of corrupting the plan of salvation. The devil is working overtime 1) to keep believers ineffective in their service to God and 2) to ensure lost people stay confused concerning the gospel and end up in Hell. It is extremely important to be able to see how the devil will use anybody today who will cooperate with him to taint the gospel of grace and create confusion regarding the finished work of Jesus Christ at the cross of Calvary.

Some will undoubtedly reject this study and be unwilling to repent due to pride or having been wrong on these issues for many years (and perhaps their entire ministry). It is my prayer that many more will be teachable. A few years ago I had to admit I was wrong and had to repent of my own erroneous beliefs on both repentance and lordship salvation. I'm forever grateful to God for giving me the spiritual light to see the truth. The scriptures have given me much spiritual liberty and have truly set me free to be a more effective soul winner and serve God more fervently than ever before. (John 8:32)

For the skeptics, I only ask that you pray, search the scriptures, and ask God to show you the truth. The gospel of the grace of God is the "heart and soul" of Christianity today. If we get nothing else right, we **must** get this doctrine right. The destinies of eternal souls are in the balance. The person who trusts in **anything** other than Jesus Christ alone is not saved; that is the clear and plain scriptural doctrine of the gospel of the grace of God.

It is not acceptable to God to learn Bible doctrine solely by reading after and blindly adopting the beliefs and opinions of "respectable" and "godly" men. (John 5:39; 2 Tim. 2:15) Where men's beliefs and opinions differ with the scriptures, we must always side with the scriptures.

The devil loves it anytime good works are added to the gospel of grace. Don't be an accomplice to the devil's deceitful schemes!

Appendix

All 112 uses of the various forms of “REPENT” in the King James Bible

1 & 2: Genesis 6:6–7 “And it **repented** the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. [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.”

Context: The LORD **changes His mind** with regard to having made mankind and then follows up in v. 7 with His plan of action to destroy mankind (except for eight members of Noah’s family) with the Flood.

3: Exodus 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:”

Context: God decided not to lead the nation of Israel through the land of the Philistines because He recognized the Israelites might **change their minds** and want to return to Egypt when they saw warfare.

4: Exodus 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.”

Context: Moses is negotiating with the LORD to **change His mind** about destroying the nation of Israel.

5: Exodus 32:14 “And the LORD **repented** of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.”

Context: Moses was successful in getting the LORD to **change His mind** about destroying the nation of Israel. (See also No. 4 above)

6: Numbers 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?”

Context: God is not willing to **change His mind** with regard to keeping His word.

7: 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.”

Context: Israel’s rebellion caused God to **change His mind** to bring about judgment rather than blessing.

8: Judges 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.”

Context: After Israel had suffered much by the hand of its enemies and cried out for God’s deliverance, God would **change His mind** and send them a judge to deliver them all the days of the judge.

9: Judges 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.”

Context: This repentance involves a **change of mind**, which led to the action of providing Israelite daughters as wives for the 600 men from the tribe of Benjamin.

10: Judges 21:15 “And the people **repented** them for Benjamin, because that the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Israel.”

Context: (Same as No. 9 above)

11: 1 Samuel 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.”

Context: Because of Saul’s disobedience, God **changes His mind** about Saul’s kingship and takes the action of removing Saul, and then God ultimately takes the action of anointing David as king in Saul’s place.

12 & 13: 1 Samuel 15:29 “And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor **repent**: for he *is* not a man, that he should **repent**.”

Context: God is not willing to **change His mind** regarding His **change of mind** about removing Saul as king.

14: 1 Samuel 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.”

Context: (Same as No. 11 above)

15: 2 Samuel 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 threshing place of Araunah the Jebusite.”

Context: The LORD **changes His mind** and does not proceed with the judgment He originally intended.

16: 1 Kings 8:47 “Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and **repent**, 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;”

Context: Solomon’s prayer that if Israel, after having rebelled against God, is willing to **change its mind** and seek the LORD for forgiveness and deliverance, and confess its sins, then God would forgive and deliver them.

17: 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.”

Context: During God’s judgment of David’s sin in numbering Israel, the LORD **changes His mind** and stays (ceases) the destruction of Jerusalem, telling the destroying angel, “**It is enough...**”

18: Job 42:6 “Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and **repent** in dust and ashes.”

Context: Job **changes his mind** about how he sees himself after recognizing his sinfulness, even though God had declared him to be “...a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?” (Job 1:8)

19: Psalm 90:13 “Return, O LORD, how long? and let it **repent** thee concerning thy servants.”

Context: God is being requested to **change His mind** concerning His servants.

20: Psalm 106:45 “And he remembered for them his covenant, and **repented** according to the multitude of his mercies.”

Context: Because of the multitude of His mercies, God was willing to **change His mind** and lift judgment from His people after hearing their cries and remembering His covenant with them.

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

Context: God refused to **change His mind** regarding His sworn oath that Jesus Christ will forever remain as the great High Priest for His children, and nothing could ever change this.

22: Psalm 135:14 “For the LORD will judge his people, and he will **repent** himself concerning his servants.”

Context: God had in mind to destroy His people due to their sin, but **changed His mind** and didn't do it.

23: Jeremiah 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.”

Context: During the Tribulation, God has purposed to make the whole land desolate, but He will not completely destroy it. This verse says God is not going to **change His mind** about it nor do something different.

24: Jeremiah 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.”

Context: When the Jewish leaders are worshipping “all the host of heaven” (Jer. 8:2), God issued a warning but no man would **change his mind** about his wickedness.

25: Jeremiah 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**.”

Context: Many times God had **changed His mind** and withheld the judgment His people deserved. In this verse God is weary with continuing to withhold His righteous judgment on their sins.

26: Jeremiah 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.”

Context: God is willing to **change His mind** concerning His intended judgment, but it is conditioned on the nation **changing its mind** to turn away from its evil ways.

27: Jeremiah 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.”

Context: If Israel continued to do evil in God’s sight, He would **change His mind** to withhold the benefits He had originally set His mind on giving them.

28: Jeremiah 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;”

Context: In referring to the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim (Gen. 14:2), God refused to **change His mind** concerning their destruction.

29: Jeremiah 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.”

Context: If Israel would obey God and turn away from its sinful ways, then God would be able to **change His mind** and forego the judgment He originally purposed.

30: Jeremiah 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.”

Context: If Israel will turn away from its sinful ways, then God will **change His mind** and not proceed with the judgment He had already pronounced against the nation.

31: Jeremiah 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.”

Context: The LORD **changed His mind** concerning the judgment He originally intended.

32: Jeremiah 31:19 “Surely after that I was turned, I **repented**; 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.”

Context: In v. 18, after the LORD’s chastening, the nation of Israel **changes its mind** and turns to God. Following this, there is a **change of mind** that deals with Israel’s future restoration back into the land. Israel’s restoration to the land comes before individual Jews have an opportunity for a **change of mind** to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour.

33: Jeremiah 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.”

Context: (Same as No. 31 above)

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

Context: God is commanding the nation of Israel to **change its mind** and then to take action to turn from its idols and all abominations.

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

Context: God is commanding Israel to **change its mind** and then to turn from all its sins so the nation would not be destroyed.

36: Ezekiel 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.”

Context: Concerning God’s judgment of Jerusalem, He is not going to **change His mind** for any reason.

37: Hosea 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.”

Context: The iniquity of the sodomites kindles God's wrath. In this verse God is in the process of **making up His mind** concerning what judgment He will bring on the nation of Israel. In Hosea 11:9, God settles on extending mercy by saying, "**I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim...**"

38: Hosea 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."

Context: God's will not **change His mind** about His promise to redeem Israel from its dispersion and judgment.

39 & 40: Joel 2:13-14 "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. [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?"

Context: If Israel will **change its mind** to turn away from its sinful ways, God will **change His mind** from the judgment He originally intended.

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

Context: After Amos intercedes on behalf of Israel, the LORD **changes His mind** and says, "**It shall not be...**"

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

Context: (Same as No. 41 above)

43 & 44: Jonah 3:9–10 “Who can tell *if* God will turn and **repent**, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? [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.”

Context: Since the Ninevites **changed their minds** and turned away from their sinful ways, God **changes His mind** from the judgment He originally intended and “did *it* not.”

45: 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.”

Context: Jonah is angry and bitter at God due to the fact that God had **changed His mind** and did not destroy the men of Nineveh.

46: 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:”

Context: God’s judgment came on Israel and He refused to **change His mind** about it.

47: Matthew 3:2 “And saying, **Repent** ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Context: John the Baptist preached that the Jews needed to **change their minds** about who Jesus is and believe on Him as their Messiah, so the Kingdom of Heaven could come at that time. Instead, the Jews rejected Jesus and crucified Him, therefore the kingdom of heaven did not come.

48: Matthew 3:8 “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for **repentance:**”

Context: John the Baptist admonished the Pharisees and Sadducees to flee the wrath to come by insisting they bring forth

good works which would match their **change of mind** to believe that Jesus was the Messiah.

49: Matthew 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:”

Context: John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3) in preparation for the Lord Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. To be in right relationship with God during this time period (prior to Jesus’ atonement at the cross of Calvary), the people had to **change their minds** to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, confess their sins, be water baptized, and bring forth fruits (good works) which matched their **change of mind**. Never is anyone baptized with water in order to get their sins forgiven, rather they get baptized because their sins have already been forgiven.

50: Matthew 4:17 “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, **Repent**: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Context: Similar to No. 47 above, Jesus preached that the Jews needed to **change their minds** regarding who He really was. The Jews needed to believe on Him as their Messiah so the Kingdom of Heaven (the literal, physical, visible kingdom that Jesus Christ will establish on earth for His 1000-year millennial reign) could come at that time. Instead, the Jews rejected Jesus and crucified Him, therefore the kingdom of heaven did not come.

51: Matthew 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**.”

Context: Jesus speaking, the context is the necessity of self-righteous Pharisees (and all self-righteous sinners) to **change their minds** regarding their relationship with God. (Rom. 10:1–4)

52 & 53: Matthew 11:20–21 “Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they **repented** not: [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.”

Context: In v. 20, Jesus chided the cities where they had seen His mighty works, but yet refused to **change their minds** and believe on Him as Messiah. Similarly, in v. 21, Jesus pronounces woe upon Chorazin and Bethsaida and points out that the people of Tyre and Sidon would have **changed their minds** and believed on Him if they had seen the same mighty works that Chorazin and Bethsaida were privileged to see.

54: Matthew 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.”

Context: The scribes and Pharisees were seeking another sign. Since Jesus was there in person, and was greater than Jonas, there was no need for another sign. Jonas had preached to the men of Nineveh who had **changed their minds** and turned back to God. In response, God **changed His mind** and decided to spare the city.

55: Matthew 21:29 “He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he **repented**, and went.”

Context: This son initially set his mind on not working in his father’s vineyard and even said, “I will not.” It is easy to see he **changed his mind**, and then acted accordingly and went to work in his father’s vineyard.

56: Matthew 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.”

Context: Jesus, speaking to the Jewish chief priests and elders of the people, scolded them for failing to believe what John the Baptist preached. This verse clearly shows that a **change of mind** always occurs **before** the action of believing. For example, if a person takes the action to believe differently (to believe on Jesus Christ alone for salvation), this can only be done **after a change of mind**, which is Biblical repentance. This proves “repentance” and “belief” **are not the same thing**. When a person believes on Jesus Christ alone for salvation, he must have **repented first** in order to do so. His **change of mind** is **away from** unbelief (or wrong beliefs) and **towards** Jesus Christ alone for salvation. (Acts 20:21)

57: Matthew 27:3 “Then Judas, which had betrayeth him, when he saw that he was condemned, **repented** himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,”

Context: After the mock trial, and after Jesus was sent to Pilate, Judas had a **change of mind** based on his own sorrow, which was motivated by the consequences of his sin. Judas confessed his sin, admitted that he had betrayed the innocent blood of Jesus, returned the thirty pieces of silver, and went and hanged himself. Judas **did not change his mind** toward God, rather the Bible says he “**repented himself**,” Judas’ repentance was selfish and too late to do him any good. (Acts 1:25) Judas is a perfect example of a sinner’s total inability to forsake his own sins. Telling sinners to repent of (or turn from) their sins as a condition of salvation taints and cheapens the **finished work** of Jesus Christ at the cross of Calvary while setting man up as his own “**co-saviour**.”

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

Context: (Same as No. 49 above)

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

Context: This is not the same gospel Jesus preached in Matthew 4:17 (see No. 50 above). The kingdom of God is an invisible **spiritual kingdom** that a person enters when he **changes his mind** about God and believes on Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

60: 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**.”

Context: (Same as No. 51 above)

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

Context: Jesus is commissioning His twelve disciples, telling them to preach that men need to **change their minds** about God and believe on Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

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

Context: (Same as No. 49 above)

63: 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.”

Context: (Same as No. 48 above)

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

Context: (Same as No. 51 above)

65: 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.”

Context: (Same as No. 53 above)

66: 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.”

Context: (Same as No. 54 above)

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

Context: Here is one of the Biblical mandates requiring a **change of mind**, or else perish in Hell.

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

Context: (Same as No. 67 above)

69 & 70: 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**.”

Context: When a single sinner **changes his mind** regarding salvation in Jesus Christ (and of course takes the action consistent with his **change of mind** and places his faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation), there is more joy in heaven for the salvation of this saved sinner than over 99 just persons who don't need to **change their minds**.

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

Context: (Same as No. 69 above)

72: Luke 16:30 “And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will **repent**.”

Context: The rich man in Hell thinks (in error) that his five brothers will **change their minds** and be persuaded not to come into this place of torment if they could be witnessed to by somebody raised from the dead.

73 & 74: Luke 17:3–4 “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he **repent**, forgive him. [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.”

Context: If a brother who trespasses **changes his mind** and sincerely seeks forgiveness, he must be forgiven.

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

Context: This is the commission Jesus gave to preach the gospel to sinners everywhere, so they would have the opportunity to **change their minds** and believe on Him alone for salvation.

76: 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.”

Context: As the Jews were coming to grips with their sin of crucifying their Messiah, Jesus Christ, in v. 37 they asked this question: “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?” The answer in v. 38 was given by a Jew (Peter) to a group of Jews, was for them to **first change their minds** about who Jesus really was and then take the action to believe on Jesus as their Messiah and receive Him as their Saviour. In this verse they were also told to be baptized to show their sins had already been remitted. Nobody today (Jew or Gentile) gets his sins remitted or receives the Holy Ghost through water baptism, but by faith in Jesus Christ alone. (Gal. 3: 14; Rom. 4:5)

77: 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;”

Context: This is one of the verses taken out of context in many gospel tracts. Here Peter is preaching to Jews a message of national repentance and conversion, admonishing the Jews to **change their minds** concerning Jesus Christ. The context is Israel being converted as a **nation** at the Second Advent (“...**the times of refreshing**...”), at which time her sins nationally will be blotted out. Today, individual Jews can be saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (just like Gentiles), but this verse is dealing with the Israel’s national conversion, not individual conversion.

78: 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.”

Context: (Same as No. 77 above)

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

Context: When Simon saw that the power of the Holy Ghost was given to the apostles, he offered them money in an attempt to purchase the Holy Ghost. Simon’s heart was not right in the sight of God and Peter demanded that Simon **change his mind** immediately and pray to God to see if God would forgive him.

80: 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.”

Context: God grants the Gentiles the opportunity to **change their minds** and believe on Jesus Christ alone in order to receive the gift of eternal life.

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

Context: (Same as 49 above)

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

Context: In v. 29, we learn it is wrong to think the Godhead is like gold, silver, or stone graven by art and man’s device (idolatry). This verse is dealing with a necessary **change of mind** to seek the Lord (v. 27) and believe correctly (v. 34) due to future judgment by Jesus Christ as the righteous judge. (v. 31)

83: 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.”

Context: Notice the **change of mind** is separate from the believing on Jesus Christ. (See also No. 49 above)

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

Context: Biblical repentance for salvation is the **change of mind toward** God and faith in Jesus Christ alone and away **from** whatever else a person might wrongly believe in for salvation (or unbelief). Trusting in and calling on Jesus Christ alone is the action resulting from the **change of mind**.

85 & 86: 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**.”

Context: This verse shows the **change of mind** occurring **before** the action to turn to God. This verse also clearly separates **works** from the **change of mind**; if works **follow** repentance, then

works cannot be repentance. **After** trusting Jesus Christ alone for salvation, the command is for believers to do good works which match their **change of mind**.

87: Romans 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?**”

Context: Here God shows that His goodness to sinners is for the sole purpose of persuading them to **change their minds** about Him and then take the action to place their faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

88: Romans 11:29 “For the gifts and calling of God *are* without **repentance.**”

Context: In the context of Israel being saved nationally, God is not going to **change His mind** about fulfilling His promises to the nation of Israel. Practically, God is not going to **change His mind** regarding the gifts or calling that God places on or gives to an individual.

89–93: 2 Cor. 7:8–10 “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. [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. [10] For godly sorrow worketh **repentance** to salvation not to be **repented of**: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

Context: Paul rebukes believers in Corinth on several occasions. His letter of 2 Corinthians referenced in v. 8 had caused them such a deep sorrow that he **changed his mind** about the merits of having written such a sharp rebuke. Later, however, when Paul saw how his rebuke had persuaded the Corinthian believers to **change their minds** and take action to correct their behavior, he **changed his mind** again and retracted the thought that he had

made a mistake in rebuking them as he had. In v. 10, we learn that **godly sorrow** (brought about by Holy Spirit conviction) is **not** repentance **but can lead to the change of mind** required for salvation. Also in v. 10, once a person has trusted Jesus Christ receives the gift of everlasting life, then no **change of mind** regarding salvation is possible. Therefore, a believer has assurance of eternal life that **nobody** can take away. (Rom. 8:35–39)

94: 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.”

Context: Paul grieves over these believers who had fallen into sin and is concerned that upon his arrival they will have not yet made the decision to **changed their minds** and take action to forsake their sinful lifestyles.

95: 2 Tim. 2:25 “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them **repentance** to the acknowledging of the truth;”

Context: God considers giving those who believe false doctrine the opportunity to **change their minds** and act on the truth.

96: Hebrews 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;”

Context: Any man who thinks he can get to Heaven without trusting in Jesus Christ alone by faith is relying on “**dead works**.” To repent from “**dead works**” is when a lost sinner **changes his mind** away **from** good works of human merit and **toward** Jesus Christ alone. Once the lost person **changes his mind** to the correct plan of salvation, he needs only then to take the action to place his faith in Jesus Christ alone. Once saved, he can move on to growth and maturity as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

97: Hebrews 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.”

Context: Practically, when men reject God’s plan of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, they will not be able to **change their minds** once they die. In the Tribulation, which is probably the context of this verse, when men fail to keep God’s commands and reject God’s “system of practical faith,” they will not be given another chance to **change their minds**. Jesus Christ is only going to be crucified **one time**, therefore these people go to Hell. (Rev. 14:6–12)

98: Hebrews 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**, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)”

Context: God the Father swears an oath and makes Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the eternal and immutable high priest, and God is not going to **change His mind** about it.

99: Hebrews 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.”

Context: Speaking of Esau, after he realized that he could have inherited the blessing, wanted to **change his mind** but it was too late since Jacob had already been given the blessing. (See also No. 57 above)

100: 2 Peter 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**.”

Context: God’s will is for all men to **change their minds** about God and how to be saved. Then all men should take the action to believe on Jesus Christ as their Saviour so they will not perish. (1 Tim. 2:4)

101 & 102: 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**.”

Context: The members of the church at Ephesus are commanded to **change their minds** and turn back and do the first works.

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

Context: The members of the church at Pergamos are commanded to **change their minds** and turn away from false doctrines (e.g. the false doctrine of Balaam, the false doctrine of the Nicolaitans, etc.)

104–106: Rev. 2:21–22 “And I gave her space to **repent** of her fornication; and she **repented** not. [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.”

Context: The members of the church at Thyatira refused to **change their minds** and turn away from their evil deeds, e.g. fornication, adultery, eating things sacrificed to idols, etc. God’s judgment would fall on them unless they **changed their minds**.

107: 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.”

Context: The members of the church at Sardis are commanded to **change their minds** and turn away from dead works.

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

Context: The members of the church at Laodicea are commanded to **change their minds** and turn away from being lukewarm, materialistic, apathetic, greedy for money, independent of God, etc.

109–110: Rev. 9:20–21 “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: [21] Neither **repented** they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.”

Context: During the Tribulation many men that are not killed in the plagues will refuse to **change their minds** regarding any of their idolatry, murders, witchcraft, fornication, theft, or other wickedness.

111: 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.”

Context: During the Tribulation, many men will neither **change their minds** about God nor give Him glory.

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

Context: During the Tribulation, many men will refuse to **change their minds** and turn from their wickedness.

Notes

SATAN EXPOSED

A Bible Study of Repentance and Lordship Salvation

Most Christians today have their full attention on the religious, social, moral, political, and economic issues of our world today. While Christians everywhere are debating these issues, the devil continues his subtle and deceitful attack on the gospel of the grace of God. Far above anything else the devil is doing today, his top priority is to add good works to the plan of salvation. Unfortunately, the hearts and minds of many Christians are blind to the devil's evil schemes by which he damns souls to Hell every day.

This Bible study exposes how the devil has successfully added good works to the plan of salvation. This study also shows how the devil deceives many Bible preachers and teachers into supporting works salvation through an incorrect definition of the term "repentance" and the heresy that has become widely known in our day as "lordship salvation."

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